

September 1935

The American Magazine of

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OCTOBER

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JEAN MILO is the Belgian correspondent of *L'Art Vivant* and of *Beaux-Arts*, both of Paris, of *Nouvelles Littéraires*, of *Marianne*, and of *Art Moderne*. His appearance in an American art magazine is therefore most welcome, especially at a time when the followers of our nationalist fashion are likely to forget the debt we owe the old world.

ARTHUR VOYCE is an architect who lives and practices in San Francisco. He has spent some time in the USSR, more than the hurried visit of a summer tourist, gathering material for a book on Russian architecture.


RUTH L. BENJAMIN will be remembered by old readers of the Magazine as a not infrequent contributor. Her present article deals with a sore subject—one that we are inclined to think is entirely modern. It is comforting to know, with Miss Benjamin's help, that the problem also worried our ancestors.

DOROTHY DUDLEY still lives in Paris and

still finds life there interesting. She used to write for *The Dial* on art subjects.

BERNARD LEMANN is doing graduate work at the Fogg Museum, Harvard University. Before resuming study he taught for a year in the art department of the University of Kentucky. Because pioneer work was being done there in presenting art broadcasts he prepared several talks on caricature which were given over the radio. The present article and one on American caricature, which will appear in an early issue, were first presented to a radio audience. They have been slightly revised for publication.

CARL WALTERS is one of America's leading ceramic sculptors and potters. Last month he wrote on preparation of the clay, and that article should be constantly borne in mind as this month's is studied. Mr. Walters was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship this year. He lives and works at Woodstock, New York.



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EDGAR DEGAS: PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER BELLET DUFOISAT

In the Exhibition of Impressionism at the Palais
des Beaux Arts of Brussels. Collection Chausson

September 1935

"THE BROTHER WHO IS SERVED"

ALTHOUGH a preoccupation with forms of all kinds is no novelty, we have rather recently intensified our interest in the forms of art as keys to civilizations. We find in comparative study the most useful means of broadening and deepening our perceptions and comprehensions of the arts of other races in different epochs, as well as those of our own. The change from the nebulously fanciful approaches of the not too distant past is welcome; we need such definite blocks with which to build and rebuild our changing worlds. The frequently infantile efforts to be bigger than we were in exploring our artistic environment did not suffice; we had to be content with our own kind of maturity.

It is not only in the relatively simple procedure of contrasting one kind of sculpture with another, painting with painting, church with church, that this method proves its value; we accept them as tangible expressions of group ideas. Related to them are the arts of the dance, the theatre, music, the crafts. All of these expressions are interwoven in such a way that each must be considered, and so, ultimately, we are faced with the extreme necessity of considering the whole culture which produced a form before it becomes for us more than a curious item in a catalogue. Paradoxical though it seems, we must proceed not from the detail to the whole but from the whole to the detail.

How far and safely the approach can take us into untrodden ways Mr. Benson has shown in recent issues of the Magazine. That the method is continually being extended was indicated not many years ago by the publication of Mr. J. B. S. Haldane's essay, *Science and Religion as Art Forms*. An even wider extension suggests itself when one considers our national fondness for organization for its own sake. It is a minor religion with us, and its commonest manifestation is in the committee. Someone should write a treatise on the committee as an art form. Lest, however, its influence only aggravate a present danger, it might be wise to include prominently the following quotation from a booklet describing the Arcane School: "The motive power of many organizations becomes dried up because it is turned inwards in the endeavor to perpetuate, support and make strong the organization, or the name, or the leader, the impulse thereby becoming separative and selfish in objective because the service is rendered for the glory of the cause and not for the helping of the brother who is served."

Here, of course, the chief concern is with the numberless artistic committees, associations, academies, institutes, museums, juries, etc., that seek to flourish in the gardens of the muses. To those of us who manage them the quotation above presents a disconcerting challenge—a challenge that we must accept sooner or later. Once we conceive of our organizations as being themselves potential art forms requiring the discipline and purpose of first-rate orchestras, many of the "art lovers" in our midst will look more keenly to their laurels, and the enlightened ones will follow the artists in a descent from the ivory tower.

F. A. WHITING, JR.



VALERIUS DE SAEDELEER: LANDSCAPE
In the Exhibition of Modern Art at the Brussels Exposition

MODERN ART AT THE BRUSSELS EXPOSITION

By JEAN MILO

BELGIUM, which possesses no strong literary tradition, save for a few rare personalities, has sustained since the fourteenth century (with the exception, possibly, of the eighteenth) an art tradition which has provided a succession of painters of genius. To this marvelous Flemish school even Walloon artists are attached, drawn, in spite of their more Latin blood, by the radiance of Flemish painting. Roger van der Weyden, for instance, though born in Tournai and despite his original Walloon name—Roger de la Pasture—can hardly be considered other than Flemish. And the case repeats itself

today. I know many young Walloon painters who have turned naturally for instruction to the great Flemish artists, Ensor, Permeke, de Smet, or de Saedeleer and Minne. However, these racial questions have often brought the two parts of Belgium into violent conflict with each other; let us leave them to consider the various exhibitions which are being held in Brussels during this summer of 1935, on the occasion of the great Brussels World Exposition.

If we mention them in order, the most important of these is, without doubt, that called "Five Centuries of Brabant Art." From art

galleries and private collections all over the world have come the finest paintings, sculpture, drawings, pottery, china, and lace. I cannot discuss the exhibition in detail—one might question whether certain pictures of secondary importance might not have merited a place—but it proves to me once more the very close connection that exists between the old Flemish masters and modern masters of the same school. Nor can I review the other galleries in the Palace of Ancient Art, where there are several masterpieces of the Dutch seventeenth century and of the British eighteenth century, and an admirably chosen panorama of French art, from the primitives to Corot and Courbet.

At present, I wish to speak most fully of

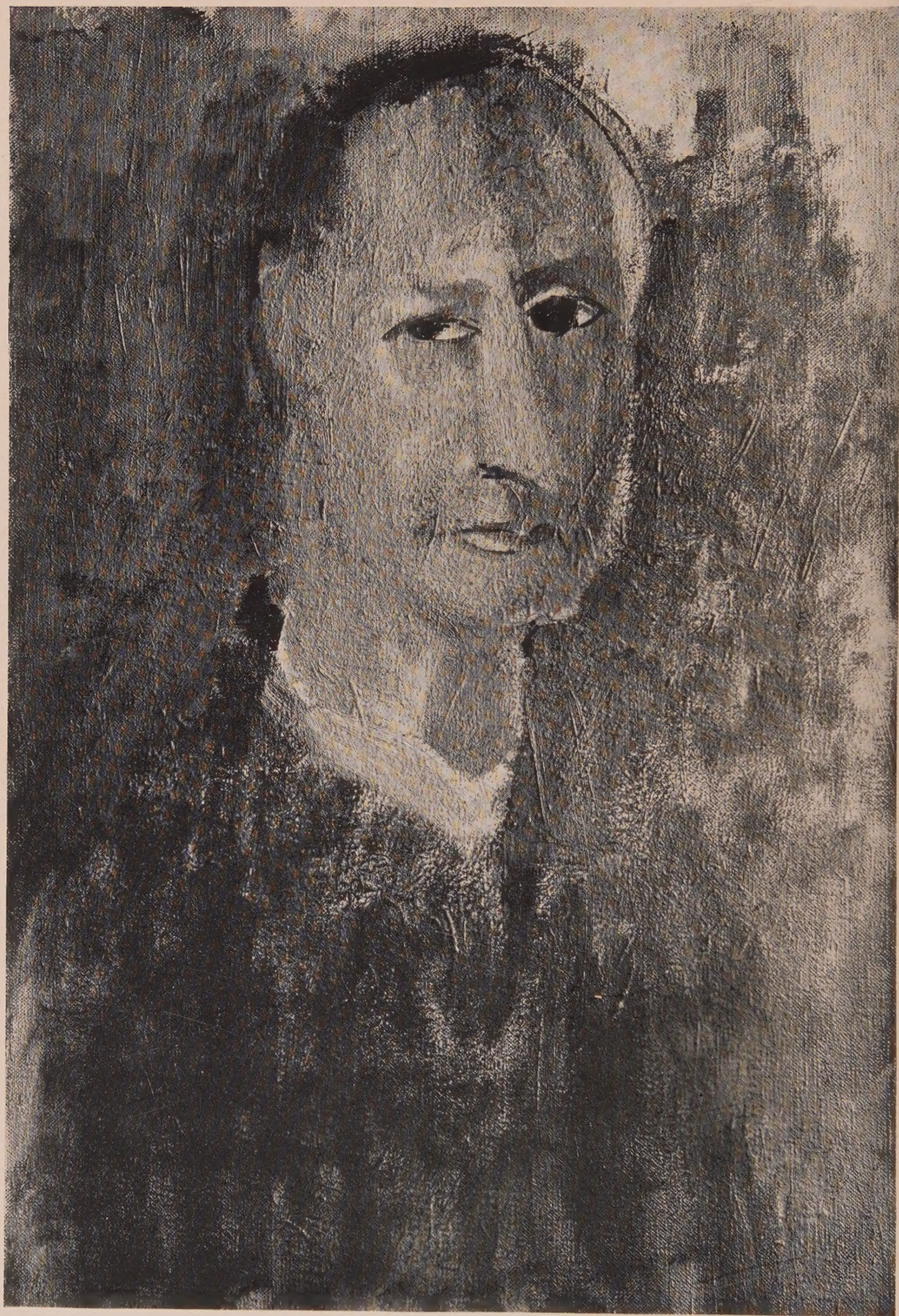
the exhibition of modern art, which opened at the Palace of Modern Art, and is confined to the countries represented at the Brussels Exposition. The policy of its organizers is indicated in the following excerpt from the regulations: "The exhibition will be open to Belgian and foreign contemporaries. Only works of high artistic value, which manifest a creative spirit, will be admitted. All copies or weak imitations of the past will be discarded."

This was a broad hint to foreigners that Brussels meant to avoid the poor stuff usually sent to official exhibitions. It was intended to convey also that those in charge of the Belgian section were determined to turn aside all clap-trap and to present, perhaps for the first



JAMES
ENSOR:
OLD LADY
WITH
MASKS (1889)

In the Exhibition
of Modern Art
at the Brussels
Exposition



HIPPOLYTE DAEYE: SELF-PORTRAIT
In the Exhibition of Modern Art at the Brussels Exposition

time in Belgium, an official show which would represent new and vital forces in Belgian art.

* * *

Mr. Léo van Puyvelde, Curator-in-Chief for the Royal Museums of Belgium and Government Commissary for the Exhibition of Modern Art, stuck to the program indicated and resisted vigorously the onslaughts of the manufacturers of sentimental moonshine and society portraits, who, preoccupied in their quest for material benefit, forget the originality of their art. Thanks to his firm adherence to this resolution we have a well-nigh perfect Belgian section.

First are shown artists who are no longer living but whose works are of such contemporary freshness and vital force that they remain to offer rich instruction to the young: Jacob Smits, Rik Wouters, Louis Thévenet. Then there are Oleffe and Rassenfosse, included here rather as documents of an aspect of Belgian art which may not live for its aesthetic importance.

The greatest among the living are James Ensor, painter, and George Minne, sculptor. Of the art of James Ensor, everything has been said; he seems to have found the whole of modern invention for himself, and for him realism, impressionism, expressionism, and surrealism are only polite tags unless they are considered as contributing to a whole. The *Jeu de Paume* retrospective exhibition of his work in 1933 was a crowning point in his career. As to Minne, it would perhaps have been better to show his works in plaster or terra-cotta, which bear the imprint of the profound emotion that grips the spirit of this artist in his creation, and which are more revealing of his genius than the large stones rather drily hewn out by an artisan.

Minne is not the only representative of the School of Laethem St. Martin—that small village on the banks of the River Lys in Flanders which played so important a part as a Belgian intellectual and artistic center at the beginning of the twentieth century. Valerius de Saedeleer and Gustave Van de Woestyne, who with Minne were the first artists to settle at Laethem, are both included, with very characteristic canvases, and I repeat what I once said about de Saedeleer's landscapes, in an

article on this artist: "... note how vivid these landscapes are, how they form a living part of the earth. One cannot question that it is a corner of Flanders itself which is incorporated in Valerius de Saedeleer's work. I could almost say, 'The trees speak Flemish.'"

Let us follow the evolution of Belgian painting as it is shown us in this exhibition. The second generation which was drawn to Laethem and the calm of the river are also represented here, and one might say that it was they, with a few other artists living in different parts of the country, who formed the



BERGER HANS: JEAN AND BALÓ

In the Exhibition of Modern Art at the Brussels Exposition



EDGARD TYTGAT, PORTRAIT OF MME. LEGHAIT
In the Exhibition of Modern Art at the Brussels Exposition

expressionist school. There is the genial Flemish painter, Constant Permeke, who, sometimes brutally, always powerfully, re-creates the soil in russet landscapes over which hang a heavy threatening sky; Gustave de Smet, whose static characters have found in the life of the fields and in the unquestioning accomplishment of their daily duties a sort of

for whom direct carving holds no secrets; Floris Jaspers, Maas, Ramah, Puvrez . . .

Outside this group one must note sculptures, of varying degrees of sensitivity, by Schirren, Fontaine, Berckmans. Charles Lep-lae, a young sculptor, has released himself from the influence of Despiau, and become a true artist. The few Walloons shown here do



MARQUET: PORT D'ALGER

In the Exhibition of Modern Art at the Brussels Exposition

superior peace, rendered in a simple arabesque of design and subtlety of color; Fritz Van den Berghe, whose demoniac spirit has thus far been unable to reach beyond ugliness toward that almost prophetic grandeur of certain Flemish primitives. Then, Hippolyte Daeye, painter of figures whose inner life is always expressed with genuine emotion; Edgard Tytgat, who is no less profound and is further gifted with a sense of humor; Brusselmans, who combines the richest color with an acute feeling for composition; O. Jaspers, sculptor

not always have the sure color sense that is the hall-mark of the Flemish painter, but they show, on the other hand, a definite vivacity in drawing. This *brio* sometimes borders on virtuosity, as with Léon Devos. The best works are signed: Pierre Paulus, Marie Howet, Navez, Ghobert.

Among the youngest artists it is difficult to choose. A beginner's work may herald everything or nothing. In this group, too, the organizers show themselves well inspired. One discovers with pleasure two painters, Albert

Crommelynck, whose two portraits, precise without being dry, sensitive without sentimentality, reveal the scrupulous honesty of the artist; and Wolvens, who has lost nothing of his ardor and has acquired a refinement of color which contrasts happily with his previous harshness. The art of Mayou Iserentant and Van Overstraete becomes daily more mature, riper, more human. We may cite also among the young: Delvaux, Timmermans, A. Frey, Van Dyck, S. Van Damme.

I would say confidently that such an exhibition, sent abroad, would give a perfect impression of the most personal and creative achievements of Belgian art since 1900.

* * *

But can one say the same of the thirteen foreign sections? Alas, no—and above all no, with respect to the two nations which boast the richest modern schools, France and Italy. The fault which we find with the former is not that they have not sent the work of their best artists: they are all here, from Bonnard and Vuillard to Brianchon and Roland Ou-

dot, as well as those most important artists, French and foreign, who have formed the Paris school, most varied and most characteristic: Braque, Picasso, Derain, Dufy, Rouault, Matisse, Dufrenne, Laurencin, Gromaire, and the like. I reproach them with not having been content with such painters, and the sculptors who belong with them, Maillol and Despiau, and for having sent a whole room full of works from the most reactionary exhibits in Paris, artists to whom the "chromo style" is well known, but who have never been in any way troubled by the secrets of true art. The unfortunate desire to please everyone and to hurt no one's feelings has not only destroyed the unity of the French section but has spoiled the general harmony of the exhibition.

Italy's mistake was different but equally serious. Instead of sending us the works of their best modern artists, they chose those of a few reputable men without genius among a large number of others devoid not only of genius but of talent. Not one of those who



GUSTAVE DE SMET: THE CENTENARY OF THE LOCOMOTIVE

Decoration for the Model Station at the
Brussels Exposition. Victor Bourgeois, Architect



VINCENT VAN GOGH: OLIVE TREES

In the Exhibition of Impressionism at the Palais des Beaux Arts of Brussels. Collection Kroller-Muller

at present make the glory of the young Italian school, not Severini, nor Tozzi, nor Campigli, nor de Pisis, nor the sculptor Martini, has here the tiniest work. I am utterly unable to understand this, particularly as both Severini and Martini have received hundred-thousand-lira prizes from the Italian Government. They cannot be said to be unknown officially.

The other countries, Britain, Holland, Sweden, Hungary, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Latvia, Austria, Luxemburg, and Switzerland, have made a meritorious effort to follow the directions of the Commissary. But apart from Denmark and Switzerland, which appear to come under the influence of the French school, none of these countries possesses what might really be called a school of art. Of course certain works are worthy of mention, but space is lacking. I should like to note, however, that the modern Dutch artists are not worthy of their tradition, and it is

surprising to find so little sense of color among painters of a country which produced Rembrandt, Frans Hals, and, closer to us, Van Gogh and Breitner.

Belgian art circles were surprised and disappointed that the United States did not take part in the Brussels Exposition—the more so since it is thus impossible for us to establish a long-delayed contact with American contemporary art. Very little, if anything at all, is known about it in Belgium. Some American artists have exhibited in Paris, and a few of us have had an opportunity to visit these private shows, but there has never been an exhibition of American contemporary art in Belgium, where there are so many true amateurs and so many artists curious to see what is being done elsewhere. Let us hope that we may have one soon.

* * *

It is not only in the Palace of Modern Art

that the Brussels Exposition shows examples of contemporary art. Due to the initiative of the Government's Commissary General, Count Adrien Van der Burgh, an appeal was made to painters and sculptors to collaborate with the architects in the decorating of official pavilions and to embellish the exposition gardens with statues and fountains. Such collaboration, between architects, painters, and sculptors, is of particular importance to young European artists today, not only materially but spiritually. Art was becoming emaciated from no longer serving anything from its seclusion, far from the crowd, and from the life with which the artist must remain in contact. From a material standpoint, it is well known that the depression has forced most artists to accumulate their works in odd corners of their studios.

This collaboration was not always happy; some architects endeavored to impose their own ideas on the collaborating artists without first trying to acquire the sureness of taste which they themselves totally lacked. Such was the case with Lacoste, the architect in charge of the construction of the Commissary General's Pavilion, which has emerged an accumulation of miscellaneous materials without the slightest unity or harmony. It is not for me to discuss the architecture of the Exposition, but I wish only to point out that several architects have completely failed to take advantage of the marvelous opportunity for experience that it offered. They avoided the responsibility of choosing their collaborators and endeavored only to come to terms with the artists proposed to them by the committees. The pavilions which resulted are totally devoid of unity or significance and humbly play their rôle of mere fair booths.

On the other hand, Victor Bourgeois, architect in charge of the construction of the Model Station, inside the main hall, realized fully the possibilities of such a collaboration and made a judicious choice among the artists who belonged to his own generation and shared his artistic ideology. Consequently the Model Station is among the finest achieve-

ments of the Belgian section. The collaborators were: Gustave de Smet, Paerels, Floris Jaspers, Brusselmans, Dasnoy, Timmermans, Van Vlasselaer, Anto Carte, painters; and Oscar Jaspers and Puvrez, sculptors.

* * *

At the beginning of this article I mentioned that at the Palace of Ancient Art there was presented a survey of French art from the primitives to Courbet and Corot. Contemporary French painters, as before mentioned, are to be found in the Palace of Modern Art. The period which unites these two groups, most marvelous of French art, namely impressionism, is displayed in a very important exhibition at the Palace of Fine Arts in Brussels. This exhibition is due to private initiative, but it is of as much, if not more, interest than the official one. It gives Belgium its first opportunity to see French art whole, from its beginnings to its immediate present. The impressionist group contains the chief works of Cézanne, Degas, Gauguin, Manet, Monet, Morissôt, Pissarro, Renoir, Seurat, Sisley, Toulouse-Lautrec, Van Gogh. It is impossible within the limits of this paper to describe this exhibition with the enthusiasm that it inspires. It is the most perfect grouping of masterpieces from this period that I have ever had the good fortune to see. The principal collections in Europe and some in the United States have coöperated to insure the success of this exhibition with loans very rarely granted up till now. It is a credit to its organizers, Robert Giron and Claude Spaak.

* * *

It is comforting, in this era of materialism, which so often neglects the values of the mind and the spirit, to encounter so many different organizations, both official and private, engrossed in the presentation of exhibitions and other art-manifestations. Let me add that at present there are several important concerts given every week in Brussels. May the optimism with which our small Belgium is today imbued serve as a lesson to the larger countries of Europe.



LIBRARY, MINSK
Courtesy Sovfoto, New York

CONTEMPORARY SOVIET ARCHITECTURE

By ARTHUR VOYCE

RUSSIA is a land of art controversies. It has been so since the day of Peter the Great, whose reforms disrupted the homogeneity of her civilization and destroyed the democratic and classless character of her art. But the controversies and contentions of the past two centuries are petty children's quarrels compared to the battle of ideas that has been raging ever since the days of the Bolshevik Revolution. Perhaps we can best gain an idea of present-day conditions, their causes, and the problems facing Soviet architecture, by briefly reviewing its recent history and by pointing out the major aesthetic theories that have molded its character.

In the few short years since the Revolution, the "left" wing of Soviet architecture successively passed through the sentimental, romantic, and heroic stages of the period of militant Communism (1918-22). It first tried to interpret the romance of the Revolution in terms of symbolism, supposedly inherent in the geometrical or engineering forms of a "reborn

architecture." Afterward it was carried away—first by the Formalistic school, and then by the Constructivist school of architectural aesthetics, and in turn, it was infatuated by the theories of the German Bauhaus school and that of Le Corbusier.

Side by side with the ardent "left" schools in architecture there worked the remnants of the old guard: those of the more orthodox leanings, who steadfastly, though less vociferously, carried on a considerable amount of work in the Palladian manner, thus preserving the traditions and the sense of continuity in Russian Classicism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The scene, as can be observed, was replete with divergent schools of thought and contradictory theories, supplanting each other with kaleidoscopic rapidity. The confusion and conflict were still further intensified and complicated by the desire to establish a purely proletarian art, emancipated from the past, and answering, both in form and in content, the



ELECTRO-
TECHNICAL
INSTITUTE,
MOSCOW,
1931

Courtesy
Sovfoto,
New York

strivings of the new political and economic system.

II

Out of the maze of currents and cross-currents in the Post-Revolutionary Soviet architecture there crystallized two patterns of architectural thought, the theories of Formalism and Constructivism. Though neither Russian nor Marxian in origin, those two schools became the dominant influences in the development of Soviet architecture and definitely determined its direction.

Formalism, as a theory of aesthetics, has its roots in the art-philosophy and ideology of the late nineteenth century. It is a theory of art, creative of self-sufficient, "pure" architectural forms, devoid of inner content (whether utili-

tarian or socially ideological). Its entire ideology is based on the idealistic interpretation of philosophy and it cultivates architecture as an art, minimizing its technical phase.

The Formalists in architecture, not unlike the Cubists in painting, proceed preferably from the simplest elementary geometrical forms: rectangles, circles, cubes, cylinders, and spheres. These forms they consider as the most "rational" and economic, and they use them as basic elements for any given architectural composition. They concentrate on bringing out the full "expressive significance" of those figures and shapes by means of stressing and accentuating the geometrical, physical, mechanical, and logical qualities that those forms supposedly possess. The Formalistic school was ostensibly in search of an exact

system of classification and evaluation of architectural forms, but it unfortunately developed into a cult of "forms" and formalistic "qualities," all but losing itself in a maze of mystical-idealistic superstitions.

Constructivism, on the other hand, is a theory whose very name and fundamental ideological identification were carried over, but recently, into architecture from the sphere of the pictorial arts. The Constructivist attempts to explore and to arrive at the content of an object through its substance, but this substance, as far as he is concerned, is contained only in the mechanical construction of the object. He is interested only in the structure of the object, regardless of its rôle or its performance. The movement utilized the freer artistic forms developed by Russian Cubo-Futurism, but it curbed the restless anarchical tendencies in Cubo-Futurism and harnessed them to the service of the Soviet State. It denounced the purely aesthetic preoccupation of Cubo-Futurism—its subjectivism, emotionalism, and its vague wanderings incomprehensible to the masses—at a time when the State needed concreteness, stabilization, rebuilding, and industrial organization. The Constructivists transferred all their creative efforts from the field of the "easel arts" to the "productive" field, from aesthetic abstractions to the making and fashioning of things.

At the same time Constructivism was rapidly invading other arts, especially the theatre, where it has had a wide and lasting influence. There, again, it revealed a sense of practical reality, stressing the use of scenic elements comprehensible to the masses, and developing a highly functional organization of the stage. Despite its rationalistic spirit, Constructivism was instrumental in developing for the stage certain *abstract forms*, such as it never knew before, and it is perhaps in this that the real uniqueness of Constructivism is contained.

The Russian Constructivists in architecture attempted to build up a theory of aesthetics whose working principles were to be regarded as an organic and rational function of collective society. The "left" wing of that school minimized the creative and individual values in architectural design and pre-occupied itself

with a biological and reflexological interpretation of the creative process.

The most significant aspect of Constructivism was contained, not so much in its "new" aesthetic theories, as in its corollaries, the principles of Functionalism and Utilitarianism, which that school stressed. Architecture, this school maintained, must be stripped of everything that is not rational, not appropriate, and not economical. The architect must first be engineer and craftsman, and the artistic urge or the artistic stir in the designer must express itself through the organic fitness of the structure and the organic decorative quality of the materials.

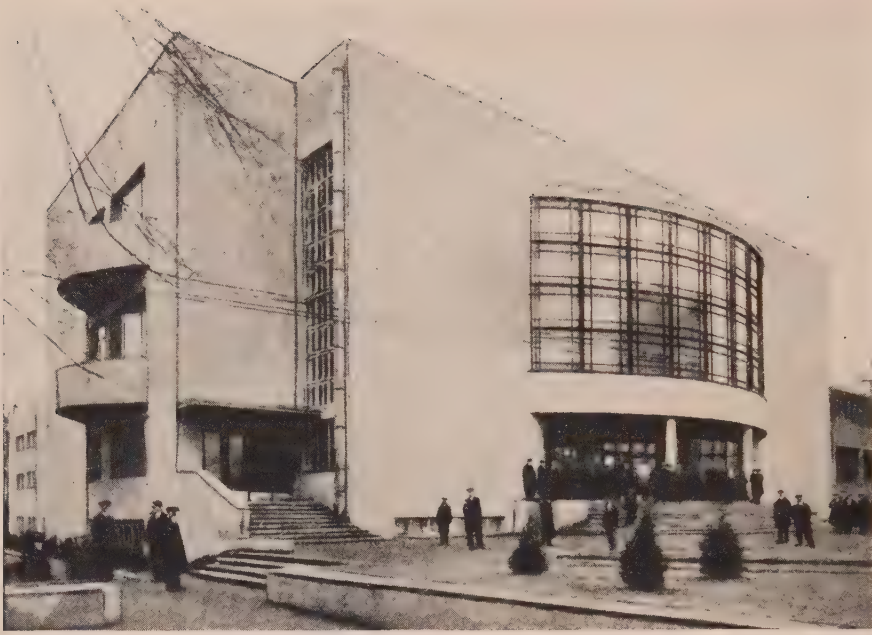
Both the schools, though built up and motivated by contradictory ideological and methodological concepts, claim a kinship with Marx-Engels' aesthetic doctrines, and both are trying to relate architecture to current social philosophy and to living and industrial processes. They have devised and continue to devise new formulas, new slogans, but the vital problem is just how to apply those attractive sounding formulas and theories to the actual practice of architecture.

III

In a practical way, the first difficulty encountered was a deficiency of academic preparation and technical skill among the young zealots of the "left" wing. There was a shortage of skilled craftsmen, shortage of materials, and lack of well-seasoned timber and hardwoods. No wonder Soviet aestheticians and critics themselves complain that architecture is lagging behind, rather than marching in step with, the other cultural elements of the new epoch.

Yet in spite of this conflict and clash of opinions and theories, in spite of the practical difficulties that have confronted the architecture of the Soviet Union, there seems to emerge a fresh and vigorous architecture, emancipated from slavery to old rules, and permeated with a certain unity of thought and feeling in design.

First and foremost stands out the crystallization of, and the more or less successful solution for, new building types. They are the new workers' clubs, palaces of culture, new types of



THE SMALL
THEATRE
OF THE
PALACE OF
CULTURE,
MOSCOW

VESNIN
BROTHERS,
ARCHITECTS

Courtesy
Architectura
USSR

theatre buildings, and the collectivized utility services: state-run stores, restaurants, and the communal kitchens, laundries, *crèches*, and kindergartens. Most of these building types have been unknown to Russia's architecture of the past; they are the product of the new social processes and the new mode of life brought about by the Revolution. They all have their specific inner functional workings and they demand an entirely fresh architectural conception.

The enormous growth of urban population and the springing up overnight of new industrial centers and towns have presented new and interesting problems and possibilities in town planning. Here, because of the ambitious tasks undertaken by the government in the transformation of society, new ground is broken, new vistas in the realm of civic planning are opened up. An entirely new type of village and city is in process of evolution.

Another point is the great progress made in the technique of construction. It was precisely during the last few years that Soviet architecture has taken a turn toward the very latest methods in building. Russian architectural practice which in pre-Revolutionary times was hampered by old habits, and archaic provincial methods, has been reorganized along modern lines. Much work has been done in the field

of technological research, with an eye to greater economy, safety, pre-fabrication, and mass production of the structural elements.

In design Russia has experimented with unusual and significant forms. In the effort to be dialectical the Russian architects have tried to reflect in their work the processes of life about them, to mirror the seething activity and the ceaseless movement that are characteristic of Russia's life, and to help organize them in Communist terms. Their ambition was to create a dynamic architecture, the dynamic quality to be stressed not only in single structures but in the composition of whole architectural complexes: streets, settlements, and towns. Daring innovation has been shown in the treatment of voids and solids and in the use of sharply conflicting masses and forms. Diversity of directions and contrast in materials have been ingeniously handled, thus lending a dynamic quality to the work.

The principles of bilateral and axial symmetry, or the emphasis on the central part of the composition, have been regarded by some of the zealots as products of a formal aristocratic age, as symbols of the domination of the propertied classes. Instead, the asymmetrical schemes of design and the employment of the principle of regularity were preferred, and quite often used to advantage. Applied orna-

ment is frowned upon as unessential and outmoded. Its place is taken by the incidental features of design: fenestration, entrances, wall capping, lettering, or by details symbolic of the purpose of the structure. In most cases only fitness and function are relied upon to give the building whatever beauty there is inherent in these qualities.

The positive virtues of this architecture are its complete emancipation from traditional clichés, and its directness and efficiency. There is a definite absence of pretense and fuss, and as a result, a lack of vulgarity. Its shortcomings are its super-seriousness, asceticism, and its all-too-obvious self-consciousness about function and structure. The intensive standardization and the ubiquitous harsh gray color of the buildings lend a certain monotonous aspect to Soviet architecture. But whatever may be said about this "style," it marks, as dramatically as possible, the complete break between the old Russia and the new.

IV

The aesthetic theories that dominated the art life of the USSR in the early years of the

Revolution deliberately cultivated a scoffing and belittling attitude toward the architectural experience of the past and the problems of *style*. Now, when Soviet architecture faces the task of the creative reconstruction of its entire architectural front, the problem of its attitude toward the architectural heritage of the past assumes unusual prominence. It becomes more and more evident that the high-sounding phrases and the laboratory-confined experiments of the earlier days are not sufficient for the creation of a great architecture befitting the new epoch. Neither Formalism, which cultivated "architecture-as-an-art" and tried to ignore technique entirely, nor Constructivism, which made a fetish of the technical elements of architecture to the detriment of form, is wholly in accord with the philosophy of the Soviet aestheticians.

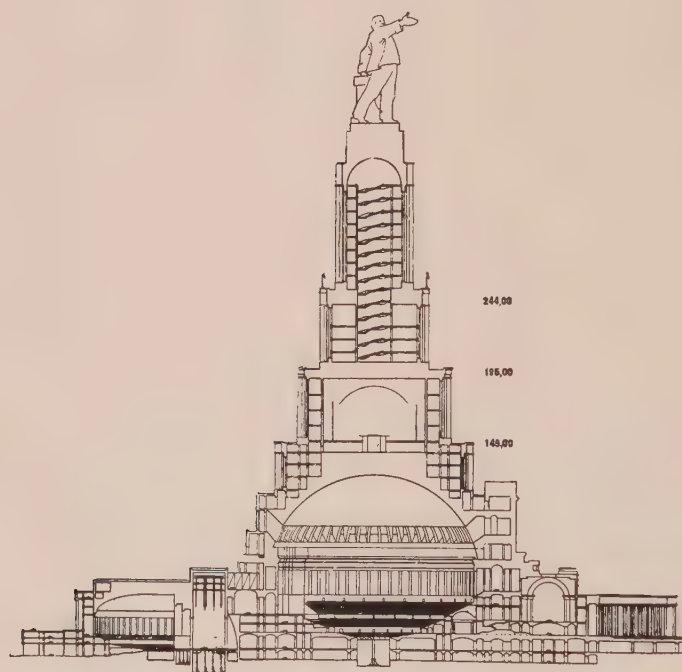
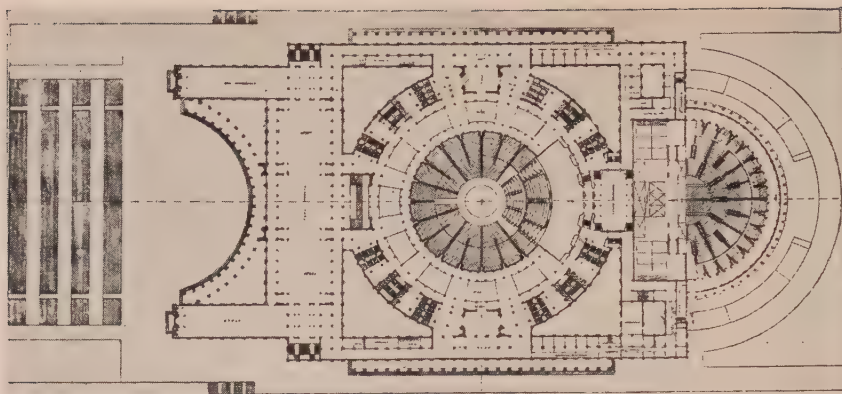
The competition for the Palace of the Soviets held in 1931 (the chief event in the artistic life of the USSR) has been instrumental in focusing the attention of the Soviet architects on a number of important issues: namely, the problem of unity of technique and ideology; the attitude toward ultra-modern Func-



CLUB FOR
TRAMWAY
WORKERS,
MOSCOW,
1929

K. C. MEL-
NIKOFF,
ARCHITECT

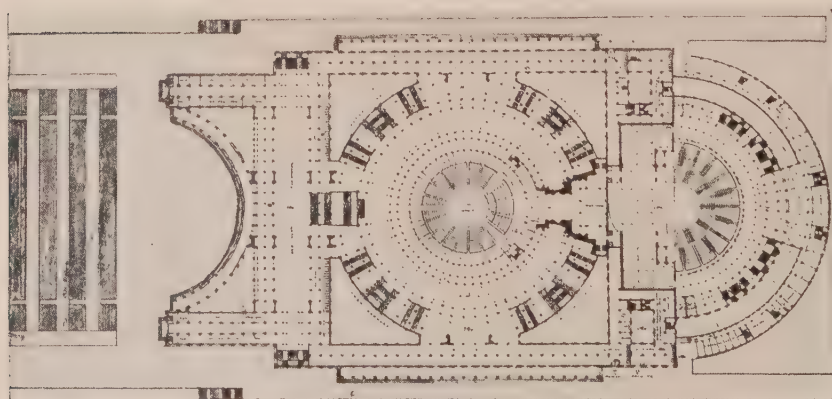
Courtesy
Sovfoto,
New York



PALACE OF THE SOVIETS,
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY,
1934. PROFESSOR B. G.
GELFREICH, B. M. IOFAN,
AND ACADEMICIAN B. A.
TCHOUKO, ARCHITECTS

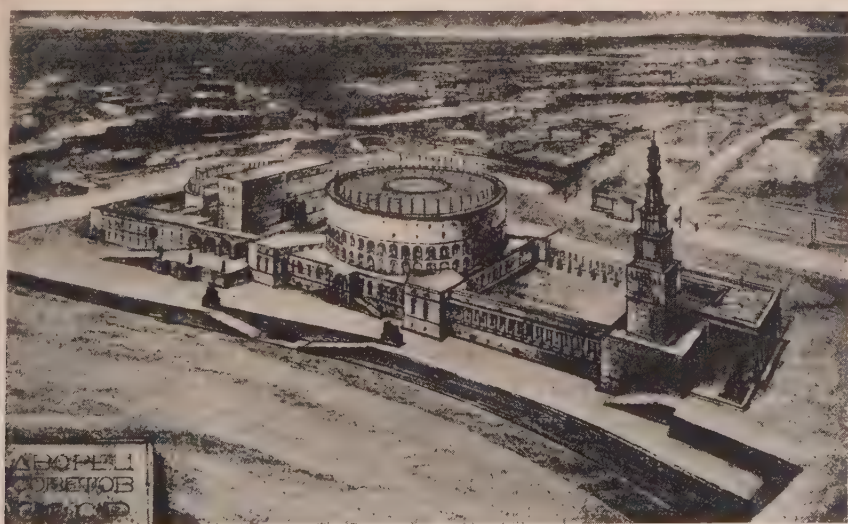
Courtesy Stroitelstvo Moscvy

(Above) Plan at level of
37.5 Meters. (Left) Section.
(Below) Plan at level of
21 Meters. The scale in each
case is 1:2000.



PALACE OF
THE SOVIETS,
MOSCOW,
FEBRUARY, 1934
PHOTOGRAPH
FROM MODEL

Courtesy *Stroitelstvo
Mosvy* (See Plans
on Facing Page)



PALACE OF
THE SOVIETS,
COMPETITION
PROJECT. I. W.
JOLTOWSKI,
ARCHITECT

Placed third in
Competition,
Moscow, 1932.

Courtesy *Soviet-
skaya Arhitektura*

tionalism (which in the minds of many Soviet aestheticians is closely bound up with the relation of man to machines); the relation of Soviet architecture to the architectural heritage of the past; and the problem of a possible synthesis of architecture with sculpture and painting. The Palace is supposed to be the rival and the antithesis of the Palace of the League of Nations. It is to be the architectural monument, the ideological reflection, and practical expression of the chief aims and aspirations of Soviet Russia. Mark that the competition program did not set any definite style for the building, but it did demand that "the monumentality, simplicity, integrity, and elegance of the architectural conception of the Palace should reflect the grandeur and sublimity of Soviet construction."

It is significant that the Russian architects, B. M. Iofan and N. B. Joltowski, who were awarded the first and third places respectively, have expressed themselves in a language of bygone architectural epochs. Iofan, in the words of the official report, "took from the models of antiquity their unlabored style, their clarity and simplicity . . . and . . . by way of reworking the elements of the classic ensemble and the models of the old architectural heritage . . . tried to arrive at a synthesis of technique and art." Joltowski (the exponent of Russian Neo-Classicism) "has combined the elements of Classicism with those of the feudal castle: Kremlin towers, enclosed courts, fortress walls, etc."

The Jury's remarks pertaining to the project submitted by Le Corbusier throw light on the official attitude toward Ultra-functionalism. It was admitted to be a masterpiece of Functionalism. Its bold and clever technico-architectural conception was applauded, but the project was dismissed because of a too pronounced cult of "machinism" and of machine aestheticism, and because of its poorly articulated primary purpose.*

The awards, and the critically reasoned

* The Palace Construction Council found it necessary to order further revisions and development of the twelve best projects. The winning design was chosen through a two-stage competitive-elimination process. B. M. Iofan's project was accepted May 5, 1933, as a working basis. He was appointed chief architect, while the Academician Tchouko and Professor Gelfreich were nominated co-authors.

comments of the Competition Jury, are perhaps the best indication of the direction into which Soviet architecture is drifting. It is evident that the erstwhile infatuation for stark utilitarianism and ultra-modern Functionalism is on the wane. Soviet Russia is rejecting them because of a belief that their underlying principles are expressive of an age of machine-domination over man, a concept contrary to the ultimate aims of the Soviet social theories. But there are other reasons that can be traced to the deeper rhythms and stirrings within her national artistic conscience. The innate yearning of Russia for a fuller, richer life, for brighter colors, for more warmth, is beginning to assert itself. Soviet Russia, in coming of age and in sensing her strength, is reaching out for the things she has always longed for, things she has had to deny herself all these years. Her material success has stimulated a desire for an architecture not entirely dictated by stringent economy. Her palaces and public buildings must not be merely efficient machines, but must be worthy of her ideals. "They must reflect the grandeur and sublimity of her national construction."

V

So, in searching for tangible ideals on which to build her future artistic life, the Soviet theoreticians are now critically examining the nature and character of the great artistic epochs and styles. The current opinion, though not unanimous by far, is that the styles that are tinged with mysticism, magic, or religion, or that are expressive of feudalistic and capitalistic ideology, cannot serve as a fit inspiration for Soviet architecture. Of the styles "ideologically pure" there seems to stand out the architecture of the ancient democratic Greek world; and it is to the cradle of the civilization of antiquity that many of the Soviet aestheticians are now turning for inspiration.

It is true, they admit, that those old democracies were founded on slavery, but, they argue, the citizenry of the Hellenistic world was essentially cosmopolitan, freedom-loving, and many-sided in its accomplishments. Its architecture, in spite of glaring differences in



RED ARMY HOUSE, SAMARA

Courtesy Sovfoto, New York

age, climate, scale, and mode of living in the two respective republics, has the simplicity, the flexibility, and the gracious democratic qualities Soviet architecture would do very well to emulate.

The champions of Classicism have been careful to point out that they are *not* advocating the imitation or the recreation of "classical illusions." They do not want the cold, set forms of any definite style, but rather an appreciative attitude to the spirit, the swing and the stride, and the methods of composition, with the help of which the great masters of the past were able to transform inert building material into a living, significant work of art.

The problem of a possible synthesis of architecture, sculpture, and the pictorial arts has taken on a new significance under the influence of the recent revival of the arts of portraiture. Formalism and Constructivism have consciously and deliberately avoided the use or application of sculpture as an element of decoration in architecture, taking it for granted that sculpture, like most of the pictorial arts, was doomed to disappear, but facts do not seem to bear out their expectations.

There is a movement sweeping the country at present which is almost religious in character. It is the universal passion to portray the current activities and achievements of the labor "shock brigades," and to dramatize the deeds of the "heroes of labor" through the medium of sculpture, frescoes, mosaics, and allegorical painting. There seems to be a strong conviction that this particular form of expression of hero-worship will be an influential factor in bringing about a closer union of architecture, sculpture, and the pictorial arts, thus creating a richer architecture radiating more warmth, color, and appeal. Current Russian architectural opinion believes that the unity of theme, subject, and color, the unity of the masses, planes, lines, and rhythm of the given structure, can be best brought about by the free coöperation of architecture, sculpture, and painting: the two last named contributing in the rôle of not merely applied arts, but as free creative agents, never losing their specific individuality. All three, of course, should work together in a manner somewhat analogous to that of the various choirs of instruments in the symphony orchestra under the unifying direction of the composer—that is, the architect.

CAN WE JUDGE CONTEMPORARY ART?

By RUTH L. BENJAMIN

"THERE is something strangely static in all of Mr. X's work that is difficult to explain. It is a little related to the very slowest of the slow-motion pictures in the cinema, although it is true that the slowest of these pictures still have motion and Mr. X's pictures have none. The images he evokes are petrified and lifeless."

The above is a quotation from a recent criticism by a New York critic concerning one of the most prominent living American painters. Only the artist's name is omitted. If one is to believe this gentleman, there is little that is praiseworthy about Mr. X, and succeeding generations are unlikely to know his work. But can we really judge art of our own time? Has any age been able to do it?

Italy, during the Renaissance, seems to have done so. In Florence, so high was the general level of artistic appreciation that not only the princes and popes, who were the patrons of art, but the people as a whole had an instinctive feeling for the beautiful. It is true that stones were thrown at Michelangelo's "David" and a watch had to be kept at night while it was being set up; but that was an exception. Although the glory of Raphael may be somewhat dimmed today, on the whole the men who are still thought great are the ones who were admired and respected in their own period. But rarely since then has this been true.

When El Greco painted his altar-piece of Saint Maurice, the king who had ordered it refused to accept it. And the critics agreed with the king. One of them wrote: "Of a certain El Greco, who now lives and does excellent things in Toledo, there remained here a picture of Saint Maurice and his soldiers, which he did for an altar of this saint; it did not content His Majesty (it is no wonder), because it pleased few people." And Pacheco, a contemporary artist, said that "El Greco set his hand to his canvases many and many times over, working upon them again and again, but left his colors crude and unblent in great

blots, as a boastful display of his dexterity. I call this working to no purpose."

The best work of Rembrandt was not recognized in his lifetime. Although he had glory and fame in the beginning, it was not as much as he deserved; and before the end of his life, according to Fromentin, his trace was lost, he was forgotten. "When he is spoken of in the *Apologies*, in the writings, in the little fugitive poems made for an occasion in his time, it is under orders rather than from a spirit of justice, as if by chance, and without great warmth. The literary men had other preferences, after whom came Rembrandt, the only one of all who was illustrious. In official ceremonies, in the great days of pomp of all kinds, he was forgotten, or, so to speak, he was never seen anywhere in the front ranks or on the platforms." That other splendid Dutch painter, Vermeer, seems to have been unknown in his day and, indeed, for two centuries afterward.

Hogarth was not appreciated until 1814, fifty years after his death. It is true that his prints were popular because of the stories they told, but most of his contemporaries agreed with Walpole that "as a painter Hogarth had but slender merit," and all of them echoed the opinion that he had no knowledge of composition.

It was at this period that the first modern art criticism began. The reflections on the French Academy Salon of 1746 by La Font de Saint Yenne formed the earliest "journalistic critique" in our sense of the word, and even then they were not published until a year later, a far cry from the articles that appear in our newspapers the morning after an exhibition opens. There was no excuse then for hasty judgments. The most remarkable and original critic of the eighteenth century was Diderot, yet his opinions on the painters of that epoch seem strange to us today. He did not care for Watteau and had no use at all for Fragonard, describing one of his pictures, representing groups of children in heaven, as "a beautiful and large omelette of

children, heads, legs, thighs, arms, bodies, all interlaced together among yellowish clouds, very much of an omelette, very soft, very yellow, and very much burnt." Before the end of his life Fragonard was called a corrupter of public morals; he died forgotten. It was the insipid Greuze who was Diderot's favorite. In him the philosopher found the moral regenerator of painting, "too long consecrated to debauchery and vice." "Courage, my good Greuze," he cried, and went into ecstasies over the pretty elegy of the "Girl Bemoaning Her Dead Bird." It was the theme that counted. Nor was Diderot the only critic who thus overrated the painter of village scenes. Jean-Georges Wille called him "that profound and solid painter." Greuze profound! At the same time Raphael Mengs, living in Italy, was the idol of Europe. Winckelmann proclaimed him a German Raphael and said: "His art has reached the highest point of excellence to which the genius of man has ever risen!" When Mengs died, he was buried beside Raphael. Today he is buried in oblivion.

When we come to the nineteenth century it seems as though there had never been a time when great painters were so misunderstood and mediocre ones so overrated. In England, early in the century, John Flaxman and Thomas Stothard were believed to be the greatest artists of the day. Their friend, William Blake, was considered a madman. The animosity of Leigh Hunt was particularly ferocious; other critics either ridiculed Blake or ignored him. The struggle against mockery and neglect became so tragic that in 1811 the great artist stopped painting and engraving. It was not until he was an old man that the world began to recognize his genius. Then he again began to work.

French painters had a similar struggle. Corot was sixty before anyone bought his works. "Daubigny has little form and Corot has still less," wrote Philip Hamerton, calling Corot's pictures the sketches of an amateur. When Delacroix in 1824 exhibited his "Massacre of Scio," it was derided as the "massacre of painting," savage, delirious, drunken, barbarous. Charles Blanc claimed that he was a "tattooed savage who paints

with a drunken broom." Similar assaults continued for years. Courbet's pictures were greeted with abuse and ridicule. When his "Burial at Ornans" was first shown, the critics were indignant and protested loudly in the name of nobility, elegance of style, and all the rules of the Academy. The beautiful "Village Girls" that now hangs in the Metropolitan Museum was denounced as vulgar, and the "Return from the Conference" was an affront to public morals. Endless caricatures of Courbet poured from the presses of the leading newspapers.

Meissonier, Schreyer, Gérôme, and Fortuny were the popular painters in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The facile artifices of Meissonier were most in vogue. At the Exposition of 1855 the Jury awarded him the Grand Medal of Honor. In the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* for May, 1862, Théophile Gautier wrote: "This eminent artist has employed in his genre painting all the serious qualities of grand painting. He is one of the masters of this day who can count on the future, whose works have an assured place in galleries among the most celebrated ones." Two years later, in the *Courier Artistique*, we may read: "Schreyer joins to a grand and bold conception a profoundly poetic sentiment." His color is praised for its happy mingling of dreaminess and power. "And one should above all admire it for . . . originality." Meissonier, Gérôme, and Cabanel were among the winners of the Grand Medal of Honor at the International Exposition of 1867—Cabanel, whose vapid "Venus" was once such a favorite in the United States. Of Gérôme's "Duel after the Masquerade," Gautier exclaimed: "The merit of the execution holds the connoisseur. . . . There is something here as striking and strong as a page of Mérimée." How they did love to compare painting to literature or music in those days. Here is the *Art Journal* for January 30, 1875, saying, "What Chopin is to music, it appears to us that Fortuny is to art."

Meanwhile, what of the Impressionists? For them there was nothing but vituperation more savage than any group of painters has ever suffered. In April, 1876, Albert Wolff,

the critic of *Figaro*, announced: "Five or six lunatics, . . . a group of poor devils ambition-crazed, have united to show their work. . . . They take canvas, paints and brushes, throw a few tints together higgledy-piggledy, and put their signatures at the bottom. So at Ville-Evrard, lunatics gather up pebbles from the road and think that they have discovered diamonds. . . . Try to make M. Degas listen to reason; tell him that there are in art certain qualities having the names of: drawing, color, execution, intention, he will laugh in your face and will call you a reactionary. Try to explain to M. Renoir that the torso of a woman is not a mass of flesh in a state of decomposition with spots of green and of purple that denote a state of complete putrefaction in a corpse! And it is this heap of gross crudity which is exhibited to the public with no thought of the inevitable consequences which may follow. Yesterday a poor fellow was arrested on the Rue Le Peletier, who, leaving the exhibition, began biting the passers-by. . . . The members of this fraternity, knowing perfectly well that the complete absence of any artistic education forbids them even to cross the profound gulf which separates the attempt to produce a work of art from a work of art itself, barricade themselves in their incapacity, which is equal to their conceit, and every year come again before the Salon with their vileness in oil and in water colors, to protest against that magnificent French school that has been so rich in great artists." That same year Jules Claretie wrote in his book *Contemporary French Art and Artist*: "MM. Mont and Pissarro, Mlle. Morisot, etc., seem to have declared war on beauty." Manet, according to an American reviewer named Jarves, was "the painter-in-chief of ugliness, which in sincere self-delusion he exalts into a worship. It seems to be a fixed principle with him to make the most promising subjects for beauty—as in his 'Olympia' for instance, which motive a Titian or Correggio would have transformed into a masterpiece of aesthetic joy—the combination of all that is disagreeable in painting. . . . Olympia was naked, but as her flesh was of the hue of green meat there was nothing

corrupting to the public morals in the gross display of her flaccid charms."

In *The Portfolio*, a British publication, we find in the summer of 1883 the following brief notice: "Messrs. Dowdeswell opened an exhibition in Bond Street at the latter end of April, consisting of rather ultra examples of the French Impressionist School, by MM. Degas, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Madame Cassatt, and others. 'Le Départ Jockeys' and 'Une Dame dans une Loge' by M. Degas, and some other pictures, were shown at the end of last season in King Street and were noted in our column." That is all. But on the same page is a long review of an exhibit at the Grosvenor Gallery, in which half a column is devoted to a eulogy of pictures by Burne-Jones, beginning: "Many pictures call for note in a detailed critique; but our limits oblige us to pass to the most important feature of the exhibition, the 'Fortune' by Mr. Burne-Jones." This work is hailed as "altogether the most valuable gift to the current year in creative art." It was 1883! A year in which Degas was creating immortal pastels of nude women, Monet his lovely Seine landscapes, Renoir his "Algerian Girl," "By the Seashore," and "Fog at Guernsey," yet an allegory by Burne-Jones was thought to be the most valuable gift to the year! Whistler, too, had works in that exhibit at the Grosvenor Gallery. They were barely mentioned. His portrait of his mother, so recently glorified in America and France, was once scorned, even hissed. The critics called him a jester, a tumbler, a clown, a dotard, his paintings uncouth, smudgy, eccentric, and empty. The notorious Ruskin episode is too well known to need repeating.

Of the other American painters whom we now rank as our best, how many were considered of importance while alive? About the time that Whistler was suing Ruskin for libel, a German authority, Wilhelm Lübke, was writing a large, two-volume *History of Art*. In it he named only seven American artists, two of them born in Germany. "Finally," he said, "North America begins to take a spontaneous part in this art-movement; although here, too, there is an evident leaning toward

(Continued on page 573)



ALICE HALICKA: PLACE DE LA CONCORDE

FOUR POST-MODERNS

By DOROTHY DUDLEY

IN THESE days of nationalist fever, fast becoming a world epidemic, it is refreshing to find Mr. Henry McBride asking for Paris news.* He suspects it is "bad news," but wants it—good or bad—in order that it may be "compared and checked up with life." He wonders whether the school that has "superseded Matisse, Picasso, Bracque, and Leger" is "robust."

For myself I believe this school is yet unborn. But certainly out of the miraculous near past, which with logic we have learned to call "modern," there has appeared a culture in Paris, emphasizing certain traits of the moderns over others—a development from them, not a cleavage. This new but derived state of mind is already strong enough to be scornful of its origin; and old enough to have influenced interior decoration.

If you must label this culture, I suppose

the little syllable *sur* has still to serve as distinguishing it. Prefixed to "*realiste*," it casts a kind of new glamor, and in addition permits deference to the growing reaction displayed in so many European countries, resulting in a cult of the occult and irrational.

Prefixed to "*indépendant*," these three useful letters name the one salon that still keeps a semblance of adventure. Associated with the *Surindépendants*, in one or another of their seven years, are names that Americans will recognize: names like Miro, Masson, Dali, Xceron, who have exhibited in American galleries.

According to taste, the "good news" might involve a number of names out of this last salon, and the "bad news" a galaxy—as in all salons. Among those who "check up favorably with life" I think of four artists already valued in France but as yet little known in America.

* *The American Magazine of ART*, December, 1934.

II

Alice Halicka (a founder of the *Surindépendants*), born in Crakow, Poland, as a young girl studied painting in Munich. There she saw a Picasso show of the "blue period," and soon after in Paris a show of early Derains. To them, and to Vermeer of Delft, she attributes first impulses. In 1911 she came to Paris, and in 1913 married the Polish Cubist painter Marcoussis, who soon left for four years to fight for France. She belongs, then, like so many other contemporaries of talent, to what she calls "the sacrificed generation," the Dada period. From this war epoch date also Tristan Tzara, Max Ernst, Arp, and Miro. Her first exhibition in Paris, still-life and interiors, brought intense praise from the critic, Waldemar George.

But in these same War years alone in Paris, with so many phases of permanency crumbling before her eyes, Halicka underwent a revolt from the fixed and permanent. Solid things were not real to her; only mind persisted. She clung to it, and like Max Ernst and others with whom she talked about painting,

she taught herself what they called: "a defiance of material," and the use of "extra-pictorial means," as best suited out of their perversity and paradox to express the fragility of human existence.

To distract herself, remembering peasant art in Polish hamlets, piecing out of brightly-colored papers, embellished by hair, straw and beads, she began her "Romances Capitonées" (long since known to Paris, London, New York, and Chicago). She used odds and ends of fabrics, wire, fringe, buttons, Picassist papers, sanded or marbelized, but not with the serious design of Picasso's "Papiers Collés," or even of Picabia in his Dada creations. She made them for fun, like charades, and today regrets that the quaintness of scene—bustles, swans, Arabian chiefs on chargers, in a word, the Victorian fashion world—brought her money when she had none, and kept her from the problems of painting, more real to her.

Her wish is to be known, not for the "Romances" but for her paintings, which became especially personal with an exhibition of Polish ghetto scenes at Druet's in 1924, of which



ALICE HALICKA: LES TUILERIES



BENNO: ROCKS
Collection Pablo Ruis Picasso

the poet André Salmon wrote: "Halicka is upheld by an extraordinary power of divination. But I would not speak of this, had she not shown herself first of all authentically a painter."

Her art has kept this power, with a tendency to ephemerize the recorded moment, to make a visual poetry based on precise drawing, "precise and concise," she explains; to give the quintessence of objects, through mood rather than through volume outside oneself. Especially in her paintings of the past two years, after her favorite model, the Place de la Concorde, she has achieved this evanescent, fugitive atmosphere. By a very personal economy of color and line, with concise fantasy, she combines her images. The mythical rearing horses, heralds, and goddesses, fragments of iron grills, elongated lamp posts, the Obelisk, the distant Crillon, occasional folding chairs, little dogs, momentary Parisians with high 1934 shoulders—become detached symbols, airily related in the

meeting of her intelligence with the tourmaline afternoon of the Concorde, or its deep lavender night.

She has the wit to laugh at doctrine: "After all, being a woman I must count a great deal upon sensibility—women are more intuitive than they are methodical. . . . In a word I want only to preserve in my paint the freshness of spontaneity." Having passed by the discipline both of Cubism and of the Museums, she feels entitled to freedom. In the paintings reproduced here (one of them exhibited last spring at the Arts Club of Chicago) as in many other recent works, Halicka justifies the title.

III

A very different *Surindépendant* came from a neighboring country, the Ukraine. He does not speak of poetry or flavor; he is an acrobat or a wrestler if you like, in the realm of color and form, no matter how strident and startling. His aim, at least in result, is to



BENNO: FID

make of each picture a thing as bold as a building. Benno (Benjamin Greenstein) was born in London of Russian parents, his early memories those of Red meetings in bleak streets. He went back to the Ukraine when he was four years old, where he lived until 1912. Then to New York, where, considered a genius, he was sent by his parents to the night art school of Robert Henri and George Bellows.

Other students at the night school, older than Benno, were Man Ray, Manuel Comroff, William Gropper. He has kept a reverence for his first teachers, considered old-fashioned now; they opened a more sophisticated world to him. Bellows gave him his

first and last lesson in drawing, received through tone of voice, gesture, and charcoal, since this boy of twelve knew no English. Out of their school, out of the Italians of the Renaissance which he saw at the Metropolitan, out of his brilliant Ukrainian background—with these influences, Benno became a favorite pupil. At the early age of fourteen and for the next ten years, his water colors and drawings were exhibited in New York from time to time. Some of these belong today to collections like those of Lewisohn, Seligman, Otto Kahn, and Dr. Brill. In order to live his own life and escape public school, he left his family at fourteen and drifted around the water front and then to sea. After some years

as able seaman but always painting, in 1925 he finally made a getaway to Paris, where, he says, his career as a painter began. He came under the spell of Picasso, and into his friendship. When Picasso is named, he displays a reverence as of man to god, but refuses to admit an "influence." "It is more that we have influences in common, the Greeks, the Egyptians. . . ." Did Francis of Assisi speak that way of his deity?

Today Benno can show you an extraordinary portfolio of drawings, heroic in amplification of planes and lust for living forms. Almost any of them proves a mastery of medium. And on his studio walls is a wealth of half-geometric, half-human experiments in paint—brilliant and greedy pigment, extending hostile or harmonious relation, for the most part structurally secure.

One of the paintings reproduced here be-

longs to a pair, exhibited last season in Paris, called "l'Epissoir" and "l'Epissure" (meaning in sailor lingo "fid" and "splice." A "fid" is a wooden spike for splicing heavy rope.) In this painting the spike balancing a white oval, the accompanying window and musical instrument denoting space and melody, combine white, blue, red, yellow, brown, a thread of green, against a darker rose-grey background. In the twin picture the spike upside-down balances two ovals against a blue-white background—splice accomplished. Both paintings convey a sense of definite engagement, as of materials crucially joined.

Picasso, it is said, hates disciples but is credited with a liking for this painter's work. It has, in truth, a kind of stark splendor, somewhat Assyrian, a whiff of American rudeness certainly original with him. A small canvas conveying an avenue of Touraine trees; an-



FRANCISCO BORÈS: THE FITTING

other, his clothes on a Louis Seize chair; and again a very precise and perfect book illustration for Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*, shine with the discipline of his more classic drawings. When this talent for reality comes to join his vigor of Cubist experiment, it ought to bring about a Levantine, or American, master, made more supple and subtle by

private academy, not reaching Paris until 1925, at the age of twenty-seven. From that date he has exhibited alone and in groups, in Paris and other European cities. The last issue of *Minotaure* has a retrospective article about him.

One of the paintings reproduced here, "l'Essayage"—fluid grey, black, blue and



FRANCISCO BORÈS: BULL FIGHT

the fine air of Paris. Paris not dead, but infinitely complicated and alive!

Benno will exhibit this coming season in New York. His paintings will go well with skyscrapers.

IV

Francisco Borès is instinctively a painter. He comes from Madrid, where, I suppose, painting—like bull-fighting and dancing—runs in the blood. He studied art there in a

pink, with a burnt sienna tape measure over the bare shoulders of the dressmaker's "form," shows a little the influence of the movies; as if shapes were so ready to change and flow in and out of one another, that it is useless to fix them in the security of a single moment. The irregular ellipsis of the tape measure in the upper left, balancing with the central figure of the customer and kneeling dressmaker to the right, makes one of the more amplified works of this painter—a phase arrived at re-

cently. In his studio are also paintings with more intricate detail, where the same sense of immediacy is present, and always a curious scheme of color, like that seen sometimes in remote streets of China or Mexico, or in an Indian pueblo, or on an autumn day—colors

refreshing simplicity at an hour when one hears that Matisse is “merely a decorator,” according to the latest cliché of some fashionable critics.

But, I objected, “there are canvases of Picasso resembling music, and those of



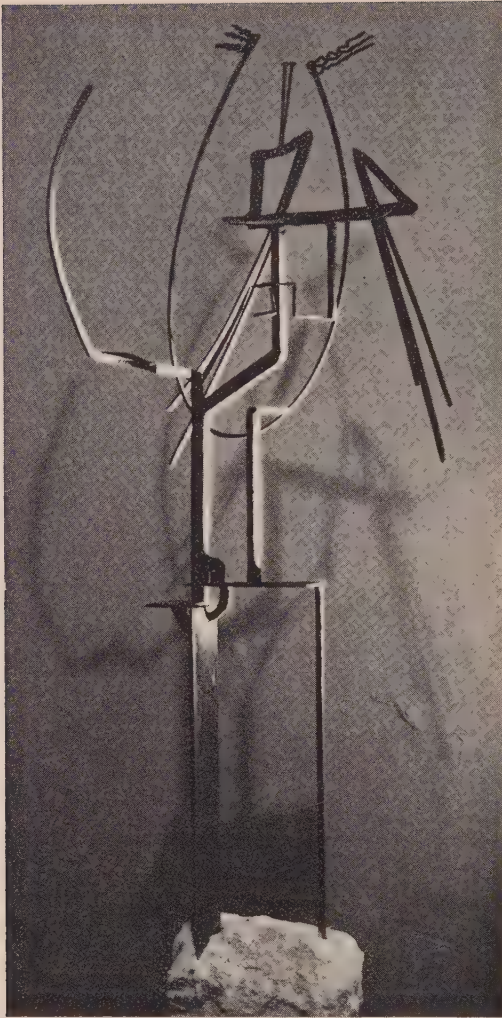
FRANCISCO BORÈS: THE CROWD

a little bit sour, entirely sophisticated and never banal.

Borès tells you there are two schools, the Cubist school, primarily architectural, where the parts relate to a preconceived and absolute volume. Picasso is master. Then there is the canvas that resembles music more than architecture. The eye is attracted by a center of color around which the other forms dictated by color revolve. Matisse is the master. It is he who today is painter *par excellence*, who understands form through color. “Matisse is the greatest living painter,” Borès adds, with

Matisse that are architectural.” “Yes, of course,” he said, “masters resemble each other, but the approach is different. . . .

“For myself I conceive from a center, a nucleus of color which radiates movement. . . . I don’t paint directly from nature any more, but everything I do is an equivalent of reality. I would not make anything unreal. . . .” Finally he would have one understand that his approach is instinctive, not theoretical, and that perhaps he owes its definition in words to the critics who have sought to analyze him. They have seen that



JULIO GONZALEZ:
WOMAN DOING HER HAIR
Forged Iron

his canvasses stress movement over repose, and seek through their assembled colors a tonal vibrancy akin to sound.

Begin in one of Borès' paintings with the central blue of a child's dress, and go toward the periphery, a scarlet background varied by accessories, yellow, green, beige—the picture denotes movement through central and subordinate color, and the drawing emphasizes the agile balance of forms changing from second to second, as light and substance change. The same is true of "Foule" and "Course des Tauraux" reproduced here: around a segment of light in the nocturne

revolves the vortex of street life; the head of the bull in the center of the other canvas sustains in motion the fighters and spectators, with, in the lower left corner, the glaring teeth of a horse upside down in death. All this shortened to a flash again as if life moved so fast, when it moved at all, that it has to be content to be designed in wiry color and fluid paint. Goya made many flashes in this sense.

V

The sculptor Julio Gonzalez is another emanation from the pre-war moderns. Certainly he has submitted to the influence of his life-long friend Picasso, and perhaps to Brancusi likewise. But far from being a derivative, he is a very personal and experienced artist, less wedded to fame than those more violent personalities. As he explains, he is not Spanish but Catalanian, born in Barcelona. Catalonia is a land apart—the first Spanish province to be colonized by the Greeks. He is Mediterranean, he says, more than Spanish.

One feels in Gonzalez' sculpture the serenity of logic—that very Greek quality of what-do-I-care so long as I translate my mood in keeping with nature.

Less absolutely than Brancusi, the sculptural master of today; less impatiently than Picasso, at once satirist and prodigious technician—but with taste and equilibrium—Gonzalez has forged his masks and other themes out of iron, bronze, and silver. He is blacksmith and artist in one, exponent of an almost extinct craft.

As a boy, together with his father, he was sent a medal from the World Columbian Exposition at Chicago for an exhibit of metal work. For three generations everyone in his family has been jeweler, painter, or sculptor. Never studying in any school, he began as a painter; but soon interested himself in portrait heads hammered out of iron and copper. Under early Cubist influences, themselves influenced by African and Oceanic art, he flattened the planes of his masks; some of them have that magic of deity or spirit belonging to tribal art. Then he began to interpret

personality and mood through the combination of two mediums, metal and air. Spaces are as important as solids in his work. His sculptures are never for the sake of geometry, he insists, but "have always a reason for being out of nature." They synthesize human reality.

The planes of breasts, thighs, legs and arms, hair finely combed and in the wind, intelligence through head, shoulders, hands, and bones—these forged planes and "lines" he calls "Dancer," "Maternity," "Dream," "Kiss," "Portrait," "Woman Doing Her Hair," "Woman with Amphora." . . . They

bring to mind out of the sparks that accompanied their birth, the idylls of Bion and Moschus; translated into the more elliptical psychic language of today.

Proportion invests his sculpture—a miniature dancer, photographed, looks like a life-size statue. His works are so stylized that, though he himself has no concern with fashion, his designs in metal and space, emerging from stone bases, the way human life springs from earth, would animate and give meaning to many ultra-modern interiors. The architecture and decoration of the hour would

(Continued on page 572)



JULIO GONZALEZ:
THE DREAM
Forged Iron



Designed & Engraved by W. Hogarth.

The BENCH.

Published in the City of London, 1735.

Of the different meaning of the Words Character, Caracatura and Outré in Painting and Drawing.

Courtesy E. Weyhe

WILLIAM HOGARTH: THE BENCH

ENGLISH CARICATURE

BY BERNARD LEMANN

ENGLAND has been called a monarchy tempered by caricature. This comment, in spite of its apparent extravagance, contains some element of truth; for the individual freedom which the English won at an early date found expression in their popular prints, which in return contributed perhaps a great deal to the insurance of that freedom. However, the tempering influence itself is remarkable not so much for its reforming force as for its moderation—a recognized trait of the British, which extends even to their practice of that art which has for its basis the principle of exaggeration.

If one were to look through a representative collection of caricatures illustrating the growth

of the art in England, the dominant impression would be one of conservatism. In this, as in most matters, the English display a deep reverence for tradition. The result has been a firmly founded school of comic representation, one that has produced much work of great excellence, that has struck a high average of quality—nevertheless an average, beyond which few of the talented artists have aspired. Only rarely has there appeared a bold experimenter who has sought to surpass, or to work outside the pale of the established order. The confining influence of a school in connection with such a personal mode of expression is indeed extraordinary. In other countries the history of caricature presents a series of in-

dividuals, each with a distinct manner or a trick of his own. In England the personality of the individual is subordinate to the prevailing style. It is difficult to distinguish among the works of the various caricaturists at any given period; and even differences among the works of various periods are not very great. Compare a drawing by a living contributor to *Punch* with an engraving by Hogarth, who was one of the earliest of the English school. There is no great disparity in point of view. Indeed, there is even a similarity in technical conventions. English comic draughtsmen, for two hundred years or more, have used the black cross-hatched line to make drawings that ridiculed, and entertained, their contemporaries. So the English caricaturist has taken advantage of his personal liberty, but also has made good use of his traditional background. The cumulative effect of this massive production in popular art is an imposing one.

Most Americans think that English people are a bit thick with regard to jokes. But this is not exactly the case. American travellers who have seen an English audience at an American moving-picture have observed that the people are as silent as a tomb during what was intended as the most comic moment in the play, but laugh copiously in a place where the normal American would see nothing funny. But let it be remarked that at least they are capable of laughing.

To be sure, there are examples of British humor that appear a trifle ponderous. And seldom does it soar to heights of unbridled hilarity. Its character is rather that of sly poking fun or tremendous good humor—as big as the paunch of John Bull himself. On occasion it can be biting, too, though on the whole its bitterness is overbalanced by friendliness.

English caricatures date as far back as the middle ages, but very few examples from this period still exist. In the seventeenth century, during the disturbances of the revolution, many political cartoons were published, made chiefly by imported Dutch artists, or under strong foreign influence. These cartoons are crudely drawn and are painfully lacking in inventiveness and gay spontaneity. The true English tradition was not established until a

new impetus was provided by the introduction of the Italian fashion for *caricatura*. A good idea of the interest that this novelty commanded may be had from a remark made by the Duchess of Marlborough. "Young man," she said, "Young man, you come from Italy. They tell me of a new invention there called *caricatura* drawing. Can you find me somebody that will make a *caricatura* of Lady Masham?" (The duchess, it appears, would turn caricature to the evil purpose of abusing a rival, as has been often done, before and since.)

This was in the year 1710, when Hogarth was only thirteen years old. He was to become the master that gave the art its definitive, native stamp. But Hogarth produced very few caricatures according to the then current Italian definition: that is, ludicrous portraits of individuals in which the defects are exaggerated. In this also he may be considered as typical, and as the founder of the national tradition. For he turned his attention to social satire, as has a large percentage of the Englishmen of later generations. When Hogarth is mentioned, one thinks first of those sets of engravings presenting in a series of episodes the career of a character, such as, for example, the series of eight plates known as "The Rake's Progress." Here we see the young man taking over the estate of a miserly relative who has just died, outfitting himself extravagantly, surrounding himself with hypocritical tutors, carousing in a tavern. By the time we turn half the pages, he is already being arrested for debt, and must save himself by marrying an old heiress who has only one eye, but much money. However, his moral stamina is so undermined that nothing can avert him from catastrophe, and gambling finally lands him in prison. Now he can sink only one stage lower; and this he does, completing his progressive decay in the crazy house, in the company of other bugs, including many fleas.

Hogarth's heavy moralizing is never tedious, because his dramatized parables are effectively portrayed, and each picture is filled with incidental details, providing endless entertainment. That is why he has always been remembered as a favorite among picture-book artists.



ITALIAN PICTURE DEALERS HUMBUGGING MY LORD ANGLAISE

ROWLANDSON ITALIAN PICTURE DEALERS HUMBUGGING MY LORD ANGLAISE
Courtesy Studio House

He may be considered the founder of the English school, not only on the basis of technique and preference for satirical approach, but also for his profound conservatism. In his preaching against social abuses, the evil which he singles out and opposes most obstinately is foreign influence on manners and customs. He cannot abide un-English affectation; he has no patience with flim-flams—especially French flim-flams. If you would dispel all doubt as to his robust nationalism, look at his plate entitled “The Gate of Calais: O, the Roastbeef of Old England.”

By the end of the century the popularity of caricature, and the quantity of production had greatly increased. A new subject was provided by an enemy from abroad, the menacing Napoleon. Prints by Gillray, Rowlandson and Isaac Cruikshank present endless political jokes about the Corsican pest, or Old Boney. Caricature had become the rage. A French noble who had escaped to London wrote a description of a busy printshop that specialized in such wares. He says: “If men be fighting over there for their possessions and their bodies against the Corsican robber, they are fighting here to be first at Ackermann’s

shop and see Gillray’s latest caricatures. The enthusiasm is indescribable when the next drawing appears; it is a veritable madness.”

Most of these political cartoons are coarse and dull, repeating a worn formula. A few by Gillray and Rowlandson are exceptions. And Rowlandson may be forgiven for his productivity in cheap and monotonous prints because of his satires on contemporary manners, most of which were not printed copper-plates but were pen and watercolor drawings. These are among the most brilliant of English satirical work. In many spirited drawings this artist has pictured a great diversity of types: soldiers, lovers, gluttons hanging over their dinners, lean poets, fat judges. He seems to have been particularly fond of ridiculing people of the upper classes. We see them at the picture gallery, craning their necks, gaping, poking their noses into the paintings on the walls, crooning decorously. In several drawings they appear at the gaming-table where the artist himself had lost much of his hard-earned money. The accumulation of card debts kept him constantly at work, until he became one of the most prolific of caricaturists.



GEORGE CRUIKSHANK: LUMBER TROOPERS

Detail from an etched page of *My Sketch Book*, Part VIII, 1835

The best known of the early Victorian men is George Cruikshank, son of Isaac and brother of the less famous Robert. He began working in the style of his father, and his earliest prints are mostly concerned with Old Boney. Today he is remembered more for his



GEORGE CRUIKSHANK: DETAIL

From the same page as the one reproduced overleaf

later work, chiefly book illustrations and contributions to the humorous periodicals that began to spring up at this time. Anyone who still reads Dickens and Washington Irving is familiar with Cruikshank's illustrations, and never thinks of *Oliver Twist*, *Mr. Bumble* or *Ichabod Crane* except in terms of those pictures which first presented their outward appearance to the public. Cruikshank lived to an immense old age, keeping busy almost until the end, illustrating books and papers, poking fun at several generations, in a mild and jolly fashion. The people that appear in his small vignettes are extremely gay, or pompous, or dirty, or absurd. They all carry a strong element of the grotesque; yet one is always able to recognize in each of them some familiar type. There is nothing extraordinary in such work. Its appeal is due to the infinite and disarming good-nature of the artist—per-

haps also due to the fact that it puts us in touch with a time that forms our immediate but fast-receding background, a period with a less agitated tempo. For us, the very mildness of Cruikshank is refreshing. He pleases us as one who conforms to the accepted pattern, keeping within the limits of the high average level, without dullness on the one hand, or straining on the other. In this way he helped to bring the English tradition one short pace forward. There were many others like him in his day. With the founding of the magazine *Punch* and the subsequent appearance of innumerable comic annuals and journals, the practice of caricature was becoming an established profession. Seymour and Leech and 'Phiz' also made illustrations for Dickens' novels. The best illustrator for Thackeray was Thackeray himself, who as a caricaturist should be singled out for special attention, even from among the great number of capable artists who were active at that time.



GEORGE CRUIKSHANK: DETAIL

From the same page as the one reproduced overleaf

One of his novels provided a name for a new magazine—*Vanity Fair*—which brought to light a young crop of artists representing a new movement in caricature—or rather a return to the eighteenth century attitude, when caricature was understood as a comic portrait. This revival was introduced by Carlo Pelle-



"APE" (CARLO PELLEGRINI):
BARON MAYER AMSCHSEL DE ROTHSCHILD, M.P.
Color lithograph from *Vanity Fair*, May 27, 1871

grini, who represents a second influence from Italy providing a fresh impulse. As leader of the new group he contributed color lithographs to *Vanity Fair*, under the signature of "Ape." Others of his circle were Sir Leslie Ward, known as "Spy", and Roland le Strange, who signed himself "A-o."

The English school of social satire was not submerged, however. *Punch* continued to be published (as it is today). Finally George Du Maurier appeared, to celebrate the aesthetic society of the 1890's in satirical works of the picture and text variety. With the rise of nonsense literature came a parallel development of fantastic drawings, full of witty inventions. Lewis Carroll's illustrations in the original manuscript of his "Alice in Wonderland," though less famous and less professional than the now standard drawings of Tenniel, are nevertheless quite expressive and entertaining. W. S. Gilbert of the Gilbert and Sullivan partnership made some clever grotesque illustrations for his "Bab Ballads." And Edward Lear made drawings to accompany his limericks which are as ridiculous and delightful as the rhymes themselves.

Without a doubt the greatest living English caricaturist is Max Beerbohm. He began his career in the '90's contributing a few pieces to *Vanity Fair*; and may be considered a follower of "Ape", in that his caricatures are

always taken after actual persons. Like Thackeray, he is a distinguished writer as well as a caricaturist, though he surpasses Thackeray in the latter activity. Like Rowlandson, he is exceptional among the Englishmen for his originality. He belongs to no school. There is no other artist whose work is like his. It would be near impossible to imitate so personal a style. Using a firm but lively line in pen or pencil, and tinting his drawings delicately with watercolor, he produces an absurdly exaggerated resemblance that nevertheless hits the mark with shocking accuracy. His interpretations are subtle but incisive, and in them is always apparent the delight he has taken in his work. This is the kind of playfulness indulged in by a quick intelligence. His mental alertness, the clarity of his ideas, are to be seen in all he does, in drawing or in written comment.

As an illustration of this point, and as a conclusion to these remarks on the English caricaturists, it should be appropriate to quote from the artist's own writings. In an essay, "The Spirit of Caricature," Beerbohm sums up his credo as follows: "The most perfect caricature is that which, on a small surface, with the simplest means, most accurately exaggerates, to the highest point, the peculiarities of a human being, at his most characteristic moment, in the most beautiful manner."

AN ARTICLE BY BERNARD LEMANN
ON AMERICAN CARICATURE WILL
APPEAR IN AN EARLY ISSUE



'The lecturer's humour convulsed the audience with laughter. M^r Thackeray's manner of reading 'How doth the little Busy Bee' was highly impressive; and his vivid yet delicate description of the Author of 'Robinson Crusoe' in the Pillory, drew tears from every eye. Among the company present we remarked Mess^{rs} M^r Huggie M^r Daggie M^r Guggie. Rev^d Mess^{rs} M^r Minn & M^r Hee M^r Gilt M^r Gaspie (of Glenbogie) Miss M^{rs} Caw, in a word all the Notabilities of our town.' Kildrummie Warder.

W. M. THACKERAY: A LECTURE (PEN-AND-INK)

The speaker's impression of his own audience. Reproduced by Anne Thackeray in *The Orphan of Pimlico*, 1876

SPEAKING ABOUT ART

By PHILIPPA WHITING

Relief

A SHORT time ago the Federal Government possessed only one agency whose concern was the welfare of the American artist. During the brooding summer heat in Washington two more have been born. I hope readers of this magazine have long ago abandoned their original tendency to wring hands over the complexity of alphabetical departments and are prepared to master the new creations without complaint. For ten months the Section of Painting and Sculpture has been functioning under the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department. The Section has jurisdiction over the decoration of all Federal buildings for which funds have been appropriated as a part of their original budgets. It is not an emergency bureau; it has nothing to do with relief. Its artists are paid according to the funds available for any given project. The two new agencies are relief projects; they have to do with the administration of part of the four billion works appropriation.

The first is a Treasury Buildings Art Project, so called because, like the Section of Painting and Sculpture, it is restricted to Federal buildings. But not the same buildings. The new project will employ approximately four hundred and fifty artists in the decoration of Federal buildings for which there has been no previous art appropriation. In addition to murals and sculpture designed for a given place, there will be work for easel painters, water colorists, and print makers. The sum of \$530,784 has been allocated to this project. The administrative personnel includes Edward Bruce, Special Assistant to the Director of Procurement; Olin Dows, Director of the Project; Forbes Watson, Technical Adviser. The second of the two new emergency agencies will work directly under Harry Hopkins, Works Progress Administrator, as part of his \$300,000,000 white-collar program. Mr. Hopkins has announced projects for the four major arts—music, the theater, writing,

and the plastic arts. Four technical assistants have been appointed: Nikolai Sokoloff for music, Hallie Flanagan for theater, Henry G. Alsberg for writing, and Holger Cahill for painting, sculpture, and crafts. Mr. Cahill's organization will administer \$6,000,000 to employ approximately five thousand needy artists, and it will have nothing to do with Federal buildings.

All of this may sound complicated. In reality it isn't. Out of the four billions appropriated to put everyone on the relief rolls to work, there are two projects for artists, i. e., painters, sculptors, craftsmen. One has to do with Federal buildings, the other is not so restricted. They will coöperate with each other. Both will have the relief wage-scale—maximum, ninety-three dollars a month. Five thousand, four hundred and fifty artists all over the country will be employed in all; they must have been on the relief rolls as of May 1, 1935. Mr. Cahill's organization has not yet announced its procedure and policies; those of the Treasury Buildings Project are outlined in the last *Bulletin* of the Section of Painting and Sculpture: Although it is a relief measure, the Project will insist on quality. The decorations will be placed in Federal buildings and they must show technical proficiency and professional competence. The precedent set by the Public Works of Art Project will be followed, in that no stifling directions will be imposed upon artists and there will be a spirit of open-mindedness toward all schools. It is to be assumed that much the same policy will guide Mr. Cahill, and that he will seek the most talented artists who are in need. Both projects have a time limit—one year.

There are dozens of ways to view these new projects, and they will be greeted with the appropriate opinions by all kinds of people, from those who think of them as totally good to those who think of them as totally bad. Their primary purpose is not to patronize the arts but to put people to work who at present are being fed by the Government



CORNELIUS ENGELDRECHSTEN: CHARLES V. EMPEROR

Recently acquired by the Worcester Art Museum

without work. As such they must be judged against the whole background of work-relief legislation. But they cannot be judged entirely in that light because projects for artists will never be so simple a problem as projects for office-workers or chemists or brick-layers. In the August 10th issue of *Today*, Raymond Moley says that we accept "as axiomatic" the fact that "public relief is a temporary expedient, the necessity for which will disappear with the revival of private business." "Axiomatic" is an extremely definite word to use about so doubtful a matter, but even if we can be confident that industry will eventually be able to reabsorb its own, no such axiom applies to the arts. Private patronage cannot resume its support of these five thousand, four hundred and fifty artists, because private patronage never assumed their support in the first place. The number of artists who ever made an adequate and steady income in the most prosperous days of this country, by any means other than teaching, is appallingly small.

The predicament of the artist is not a temporary one; it is permanent. It has been aggravated, but not created, by the depression, and it will not end when the depression ends, if ever. Law, medicine, and other professions may be overcrowded, but there is none the less a demand for a large number of lawyers and doctors. The American artist has never had a wide, dependable market, and millions of dollars poured into art "appreciation" have failed to produce one. Hence it cannot revive. While the artists, or at least some of them, are benefiting from emergency appropriations, it must be realized that their ills cannot be cured by a "temporary expedient." They need long-range planning.

If we emerge into a new period of prosperity, the artist may find that his private market has expanded. Through the efforts of the Federal Government, a great many communities have been shown that paintings are not unattainable luxuries, that they can secure fine decorations for their buildings at a very low cost; individuals who never bought art have learned the same lesson; museums have taken a new interest in contemporary and local work. Industry is using the arts

to a greater extent than ever before, and the arbitrary and unfortunate barrier between "fine" and "applied" is a little less marked. The vast distance which once separated the painter and sculptor from their buying public has been lessened by all manner of curb-markets and coöperative-selling schemes. The Federal Government will remain the largest single patron of the arts, and it is to be devoutly hoped that the Section of Painting and Sculpture will be allowed to continue permanently its constructive and unpolitical jurisdiction over public buildings. It is performing a service of incalculable value, and if we develop a strong school of mural painters in the future, we will have this Section to thank for it. Edward Rowan, in the last issue of the *Bulletin*, describes both the original mural innocence of most of our painters and the degree of coöperativeness with which they have welcomed suggestions.

Artists of America may have from now on, as Forbes Watson has declared, the best chance they have ever had. But it is wishful thinking to believe that in the near future all the artists on our relief rolls, and the many thousands of artists who are in need but are not on relief, will be able to make a living as they would like to make it. Although I quite agree with Stuart Davis that in the past artists have been exploited, I do not think that it is possible, or desirable, to make them permanent wards of the Government. Government solicitude can produce food but it cannot produce talent in quite such generous quantities. It is hard to get around the unhappy fact that we have a great many would-be painters who will never be *good* painters, and a great many would-be sculptors who should be doing something else. But we have a thousand crafts and skills which demand a feeling for design and an eye for color and our national life is less rich than it might be because thousands of people who possess those gifts are determined to be fine artists or nothing.

The six and a half million dollars which will be spent on artists in the next year will not put the arts on their feet economically. But it will not leave them quite as they were before. The projects will be, on a larger

scale, what the PWAP was—a vast research job. When they are over, we shall not only have kept five thousand, four hundred and fifty people at work instead of on a dole, but we shall also have added priceless information to the large store we have already. We shall know more about our artists than any nation in the world, and a painter or sculptor who succeeds in escaping the attention of the three Government agencies and remaining unknown will do so through sheer perversity. But when this winnowing process is completed, we shall still have to act on our findings.

Regional

FROM July 20th to August 31st, the Colorado Fine Arts Center held its first annual exhibition of Paintings by Artists West of the Mississippi. Fifty painters were invited, and the individual canvases were selected where possible. The foreword to the catalogue states that every effort was made to choose artists "who belong to the West and who have a thoroughly American viewpoint . . . as free as possible from the more superficial trends of contemporary European art." Mr. Stanley Lothrop, Director, writes us that he doubts that "any exhibition of this regional type has been given before in the West," and that it seems to him "thoroughly American and of national importance." As a matter of fact both Kansas City and Denver hold annual exhibitions of the work of Western artists, the former a Mid-West show, the latter one for the Rocky Mountain region. But that is unimportant. The new show, like the others, is "regional."

What is a regional exhibition? This one is confined to artists who are in some way identified with the West—who were born there and moved elsewhere, or who were born elsewhere and moved there. The identification is slightest, perhaps, with Boardman Robinson who merely happens to be teaching at Colorado Springs, and with certain members of the Taos group. But I have no wish to belittle the claims of the West to its own creativeness, I only question whether any part of America can pretend to a regional art. Of

the fifty artists listed in this catalogue, ten are still resident in the states in which they were born. Of these ten, three went neither to the East nor to Europe for training. The number of artists born in California who have moved to New York about parallels the number born in New York who have moved to California. If a survey were made of the biographies of all the artists in *Who's Who in American Art*, the same percentages would probably work out, for any section. The greatest barrier to the development of true regionalism is the extraordinary mobility of Americans in general.

There is a commonly accepted superstition that regionalism has to do with subject matter. This theory is the outgrowth of the complete absence of regionalism in American painting. Had we ever known genuine regionalism we could not possibly be so superficial. Mediaeval Europe produced numberless regional schools, markedly different one from another. The subject matter was universal; regional qualities were expressed in style. Style evolution is a gradual process, and one which demands tradition, restricted influence from the outside, and a relatively static society. It is cumulative, and represents the contributions of generations of artists, working with, and varying, traditional forms.

Olin Dows, writing in the *Bulletin* of the Government's Section of Painting and Sculpture, summarizes his conclusions after appraising mural sketches all over the country: "I can detect no regional tendency of expression, though there is obviously localized subject matter." It would be surprising if Mr. Dows's findings had been otherwise. There is one very interesting word in his statement, although I am sure it was not consciously used. Our subject matter is not "local"; it is "localized," and it is localized because our regionalism is a state of mind. A very recent state of mind. It is as ridiculous to speak of the professional Westerners, Benton, Curry, and Wood, as regional artists as it would be to characterize Gauguin as a Polynesian artist. Because you respond to an environment that you love, because you depict the life around you, you may be an artist but you are not necessarily regional. That much-vaunted and,

at present, somewhat tiresome quality comes not directly out of the life of the people, the hog-killing and crap-shooting, but out of the art of a people. There is a simple way to produce it, if we want it. We have only to divide America up into regions, forbid all artists to leave their regions for a period of a hundred years; during that time to see no work of art, or reproduction thereof, from another region. To be sure most of our painting might die out by that time, but that which survived would be regional.

Movies Become Museum Pieces

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART has received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to establish a motion picture department. It will be known as the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art, Inc.; Iris Barry will be Curator. Records of "the only art peculiar to the twentieth century" will be assembled, catalogued, and preserved, including as complete a collection as possible of films made in this country and abroad, since 1889. Books, periodicals, "stills," and old music scores will be added. The collection will be exhibited and circulated among museums and colleges. Fees will be lower than cost.

Mr. John Hay Whitney, President of the Film Library, commented: "It is estimated that seventy million people attend the movies every week in the United States. The very great influence of the motion picture in forming the taste and affecting the lives of the greater part of our population is well known. Despite the efforts the industry itself has made in this field, much remains to be done in arousing a critical, selective attitude toward the films in that part of the public most responsive to the arts—students, visitors to museums and art galleries and the active group in each community which takes the leadership in cultural matters. The situation is as though no novels were available to the public except the current year's output or as though no paintings could ever be seen except those painted during the previous twelve months."

The movies certainly need a critical, selec-

tive attitude, but it is relaxing to realize that few of the seventy million will ever be earnestly glib about Charlie Chaplin's "periods."

Robineau Ceramics

THE Fourth Annual Robineau Memorial Ceramic Exhibition will open at the Syracuse Museum October fourteenth. The show is usually held in April but this year was postponed until fall. Richard F. Bach will be jury chairman; the other two members are R. Guy Cowan and Carl Walters. An invited group of industrial ceramics will be shown concurrently. The art division of the American Ceramic Society will hold its annual convention in Syracuse from October twenty-fifth to twenty-seventh, arranged to coincide with the exhibition.

Museum Internes

AN INNOVATION in museum training will be inaugurated during the coming year by the Brooklyn Museum: the establishment of a system of internship as an integral part of museum training. Professor C. R. Morey of Princeton approves the move in saying that a museum man should be trained in a museum and not in a university. The six novitiates who will be given Rockefeller fellowships at Brooklyn must, however, have had a thorough academic training before they start practical training. As internes they will have wide experience in technique and social and community service. Appointments will be announced later.

New School Courses

IN THE fall term, the New School for Social Research, New York, will add to its lecturers Meyer Shapiro and Jerome Klein, both of Columbia University. Both will discuss contemporary art. In the spring term there will be series by Lionello Venturi, Italian art historian, René d'Harnoncourt, of Sarah Lawrence College's art department, and Edgar Johnson of the College of the City of New York. Mr. Venturi's subject will be the History of Art Appreciation, Mr. d'Harnoncourt's, the Arts of Mexico, and Mr. Johnson's, Art in the Social Order.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS

VIIB: CERAMIC SCULPTURE: MODELLING, CASTING, FIRING, GLAZING

By CARL WALTERS

MODELLING

IN MODELLING ceramic sculpture either one of two processes may be used. If the artist intends to make more than one figure, he may proceed by building up the form with clay or plasticine on an armature in the usual manner, and then having a plaster of paris piece mould made from the original. The other method is for one piece only, where it is not intended to reproduce it, and the artist is willing to risk his original to the fire. In this case an armature cannot be used, as the clay shrinks in the drying, while the armature does not, and the result would be a series of cracks, and the falling away of the clay. Therefore it is advisable to make a hollow figure, unless it is very small, as a solid figure is difficult to dry and in firing it may still contain moisture and cause an explosion.

There are two methods for making a hollow figure, either building up by coils, as the Indians of the Southwest make their pottery, or by using clay cylinders to create a rough form, and then building on them with coils. In either case the clay should be well wedged, to insure a uniform texture and to dispel air bubbles.

As an example, the figure in the illustration was made by rolling out a sheet of clay on canvas (so that the under surface will not adhere), and when the clay was slightly stiffened, making from it a self-supporting cylinder by tapering the two edges that are to be lapped, moistening them with slip, and pressing well together. The cylinder was then stood on end and shaped into somewhat the desired form by pressing together and extending from the inside. This was then set at approximately a forty-five degree angle, supported with dowlings, on a clay base to which it was welded with clay and slip. A smaller cylinder was formed in the same manner for the head and joined by cutting an opening the size and reverse outline of the neck, and

pressed together, using slip to assure a good contact. The legs and head were then completed with ropes of clay, again using slip between the coils to weld them together. When clay is added, the contacting surfaces should be moistened, and the whole figure should be sprayed occasionally. Care should be taken not to spray too often or too energetically, as the clay may become too soft and collapse.

To keep work damp over night, for a small figure a rectangular frame can be made and covered with rubber sheeting, as the weight of wet cloths sometimes leaves an imprint. For larger pieces the best arrangement is a damp-box, which is a zinc-lined box with a tight-fitting cover, in which are kept wet plaster bats to keep it moist.

Ceramic figures, like stone, should be kept free from delicate projections which are apt to be broken off. If the piece is to be glazed, sharp edges should be avoided, as the glaze has a tendency to flow away from them. Most of the modelling can be done with the fingers and one or two good tools. When it is leather hard it can be carved with a knife or a plaster tool.

CASTING

If the figure is to be cast it is an advantage to start with a simple form, at first avoiding undercuts, so that it can be cast in a two- or three-piece mould, as then it will be possible to do the casting for oneself, unless of course one prefers to leave it to a professional caster. When simple moulds have been conquered, more complicated ones can be tackled. If the figure has projections, such as ears, etc., they may be left off when being cast and added to the figure after it is released from the mould, as may any other details.

In making a piece mould, a two-piece one is simplest to begin with. The figure should be so modelled that it can be divided into two sections, without undercuts. Divide the figure with thin pieces of brass or tin, cut

wedge-shape with the long point cut off, oil, and insert them in a line, starting with the head and down the two sides, allowing each piece of metal to slightly lap the next. To prepare plaster of paris for making the mould, use an enamel or a rubber bowl. Fill two-thirds' full with water and slowly sprinkle the plaster through the fingers until the water is nearly soaked up. Stir until it thickens to the consistency of heavy cream, then throw with the hand against one side of the divided figure until it is built up to the thickness of about an inch. Remove the metal wedges and carve a number of sockets on the exposed surface, after which the surface is covered with liquid soap or oil to prevent the next half of the mould from sticking, and proceed as before. When the plaster has set, thin wedges can be driven in the joint and the mould can be separated. If there is any clay adhering, the inside should be washed out with a sponge. The mould should then be tied together and left to dry.

Slip, the consistency of thick cream, is then poured through the opening in the bottom of the mould until it is filled. As the water is absorbed from the slip by the plaster a layer of clay will be formed, and as the slip sinks, more should be added, keeping the mould level full. From time to time scrape away with a knife from the top of the mould to determine the thickness of the wall. When the wall has thickened to about three-eighths of an inch, all the remaining slip should be poured out, and the mould stood in an inverted position. When the clay in the mould has toughened a little, it should be cut loose from the edge to the depth of about an eighth of an inch. With further drying the figure will shrink away from the mould and may be released. The seams should be smoothed out with a modelling tool, the surface re-touched, if necessary, and left to dry.

A figure can also be made by rolling out a sheet of clay on canvas, as previously described, and pressing the smooth surface into the two halves of the mould. The edges should be trimmed, allowing about one-eighth of an inch projection all around, then moistened with slip and the two halves pressed firmly together. The seams should be further

worked together by pressing with a tool from the inside. A pressed figure will shrink less in drying than a cast one, and can be taken from the mould in a much shorter time.

FIRING

Kilns are of two kinds, open and muffle, and vary in their construction, depending upon the fuel used. The first kilns were naturally for wood, but where wood was scarce, as in Egypt and parts of China, straw



CARL WALTERS: MANDRILL
Preparatory Steps in Preparation

was used in its place. When coal was discovered it rapidly displaced the wood-burning kilns, and now gas, oil, and electric furnaces have practically displaced coal.

Terra cotta can be fired in any type of kiln, but glazed pieces should either be fired in saggars, if an open kiln is used, or in a muffle kiln, which is an enclosed oven which allows the flames to play on all sides of it, without coming in contact with the contents. The most practical type of kiln for an individual who is doing his own firing, is a muffle kiln, or better yet, an electric one, although more expensive, as the electric kiln is simpler

to manage, and has an automatic pyrometer that can be set for the desired temperature. Seger cones are generally used in small, non-electric kilns to determine the temperature.

After the figure has been placed in the furnace on a stilt or pieces of fire-brick, so that the heat can circulate underneath as well as around all sides, and the Seger cones placed where they can be seen from the spy-hole, the fire should be applied gradually, as clay retains some moisture always, even though it

bent over in the form of an arch, the fire may be shut off, and the kiln left to cool.

GLAZING

Glazes offer the sculptor many possibilities in color and design. The important types of glazes are: alkaline glaze, used by the Egyptians and Persians, the oldest and most difficult; lead glaze, used for most ordinary purposes; feldspathic glaze, used for high fire porcelains; salt glaze, produced by throwing salt on the floor of the kiln, as it vaporizes it combines with the silica in the clay, forming glass, used for most chemical containers, common tiling, and stoneware.

It is possible to purchase glazes ready for use, but more satisfactory is the preparation of your own from the raw materials and a gain in the knowledge of ceramics. The ingredients of colorless glazes, commonly used, are: sand, flint, quartz, fluorospar, feldspar, kaolin, Cornish stone, bismuth, gypsum, limestone, nitre, boneash, borax, barytes, red lead, white lead, tin oxide, zinc oxide, salt, potash, soda.

For color different metallic oxides are used, as: cobalt, for blue; copper for blue, green and red; chrome for green; iron for yellow, brown and green; nickel for gray and brown; uranium for yellow; manganese for purple; and tin oxide for opaque glaze, white or colored.

Soluble ingredients, such as soda, potash, borax, etc., are not commonly used in raw glazes, but must be fritted, that is, fused in a crucible or fritting furnace, before being mixed with the other materials. Lead is the principal flux used in raw glazes.

Fitting the glaze to the body can only be achieved by experiment, although occasionally one has luck and it fits at the first trial. If the glaze crazes, that is, develops minute cracks all over the surface, it may be due to over-firing or under-firing, but if that is not the case it is evident that there is an inherent disagreement in expansion, which can be cured by the addition of flint to either the glaze or the body. It is best to add it to the body, if possible so as not to raise the firing point of the glaze. If the craze is not too deleterious it is sometimes not a detriment; the Chinese have developed it into an asset.



CARL WALTERS: MANDRILL
Courtesy Downtown Gallery

may have been drying over a long period. This moisture must be expelled slowly, as otherwise the steam generated will cause the figure to explode. The size of the figure and the thickness of its walls will determine the length of time necessary for this slow fire. A small piece can be brought up fairly rapidly, but that must be learned by experience. Most ordinary clays mature in the firing at a temperature between 1000°-1040° Centigrade, or Seger cones 05, 04, 03. The ends of these cones should be embedded at an angle in a small strip of clay to which a large quantity of sand has been added. When the cone has

WILENSKI RE-VIEWED

By E. M. BENSON

HOWEVER violently one may at times disagree with Mr. Wilenski's judgments, one is, nevertheless, obliged to admit that he has made a substantial contribution to art criticism. This is not meant as a left-handed compliment. For, when the positive content of Wilenski's complete work is placed beside the negative, the former so far overshadows the latter that it seems petty to quibble over details. The fact is that he gives himself some mighty tough critical nuts to crack, problems which most of his *confrères* either treat ineffectually or not at all. Some distinction must be made, certainly, between the pioneer who cracks his shins on new ideas and the fellow who hurdles gracefully over old ones. Wilenski's shortcomings therefore, provoking as they may be, are far more excusable than Clive Bell's. In short, the imperfections of originality are preferable to the sterile perfection of superficiality.

This I think should be kept in mind especially during those moments when Wilenski is particularly exasperating, as he often is. Indeed, I know of no one practising the "ig-

noble" profession of art criticism who can be more discerning and more short-sighted at the same time. This, I might hastily add, is less true of his more recent than his earlier work. His *Meaning of Modern Sculpture* was a superlative job, and no impartial critic can deny that. I wish as much could be said for *The Modern Movement in Art*, published some seven years ago and now reissued* with additional footnotes and a flimsy epilogue in which the modern movement is brought up to date.

This much, however, can and should be said for the book. When it appeared in 1927, it was one of the very few publications of its kind which probed beneath the surface of historical and aesthetic causality into the meaning of the modern movement from an original, if not wholly valid, point of view. Setting aside for the moment the comparative validity of Wilenski's critical approach to his material, no one who recalls the effect which the book had when it was first published can possibly deny that it was immensely valuable in serving to stem the tide of Clive Bellian, art-is-an-ecstasy aestheticism, and in providing a persuasive defense of the so-called "Classical Cubist Renaissance," at a time when both the movement's eulogists and mudslingers were resorting to hysterical oratory instead of reason.

I am equally certain that the permanent effects of the book would have been far more lasting if Wilenski had resisted the temptation to classify the plastic arts into such superficial pigeonholes as "classic," "romantic," "descriptive," and their qualifying adjectives, "original," "derivative," and "popular." Certainly these categories, when judiciously applied, may to some extent characterize the arts to which they are ascribed. But such a method of "spotting," instead of developing the spectator's powers of observation and critical analysis by helping him focus his attention on



REMBRANDT: GIRL ASLEEP AT OPEN WINDOW (DRAWING)

* *The Modern Movement in Art*. By R. H. Wilenski. New York, 1935. Frederick A. Stokes Company, Publishers. Price, \$3.75.

the basic formal and psychological relationships in a work of art, invites him to make the same kind of snap judgments that he was in the habit of making before Wilenski came along. What our author is doing, then, is expanding the layman's snap-judgment vocabulary rather than helping him sharpen his perceptions.

Our complaint is less with the way Wilenski defines his terms than with the artists he tries to fit to them. One very often has the feeling that he is forcing a nine-size foot into a six-size shoe. There is, for example, some justification in classifying Rembrandt and Daumier as "original romantic artists" as distinguished from Cézanne and Raphael who are described as "original classic artists." Blunt as this distinction is, it becomes even more meaningless when we learn that the Pre-Raphaelite, Rossetti, was also an "original romantic artist." The truth of the matter is that the glove more nearly fits Rossetti than it does either Rembrandt or Daumier who could, with equal justification, be recruited into the "original classic" and "original descriptive" divisions. Wilenski would probably reply to this by referring us to a statement which he made on page fifty-three of his book: "The genius overrides all classifications." If he really believes this, then I can't understand why he ever went to the trouble of erecting his system of pigeonholes, unless he was only interested in cataloguing the non-genius, which, obviously, was not his intention.

It seems to me that it is far more important to point out what an artist tried to do in his art and the structural and other means he used to do it, than it is to pin a categorical tag on him and put him away in cold storage. Frequently Wilenski does both, as in the case of Sargent, El Greco, Haydon, and those whom he chooses to call the "flat-pattern" and "mountain-of-bricks" cubists, whose work he soundly and keenly interprets. Most of the time, however, he is so busy trying to button-hole artists that he only sees in their art what he happens to be looking for. We are never permitted to forget that Wilenski has a thesis to establish and defend; and it is too much to expect him to do his own blasting. "My thesis" right or wrong is what it amounts to.



DAUMIER: CHRIST PRESENTED TO THE PEOPLE

Collection Folkwang Museum, Essen

Under such circumstances Truth is destined to take a partial holiday. Almost any section of Wilenski's book might serve to illustrate this. Let us examine his critical position in regard to the "camera vision" and its influence on nineteenth century technique—a problem of considerable significance in relation to the development of the modern movement and all subsequent phases of contemporary art. Wilenski's mind is made up. "The camera . . . degraded pictorial technique to unimaginable depths." And he can prove it. There were the Pre-Raphaelites who got off on the wrong foot by misreading Ruskin's admiration for the camera; and Ingres who, in his later years, lost his heart and his art to the daguerreotype; and Corot whose middle-period technique "was undermined by an attempt to rival the camera's true vision."

All of which, and a great deal more, is perfectly true. But it is only a half truth. The camera had a positive as well as a negative influence on the plastic arts; and, personally, I am inclined to think that the former more than counterbalanced the latter. This Wilen-

(Continued on page 563)

COMMENT AND CRITICISM

Joint Resolution Again

Sir:

I read with great interest Mr. Watson's article on House Joint Resolution No. 220.

It seems to me that the artist should have a chance to voice his opinion before such an important department is established in Washington.

I agree that a department representing such varied professions as Science, Art, and Literature could not function properly. The scope is too large. A Department of Fine Arts, unless it is headed by a most broad-minded and responsible person, is doomed to fail.

Let us not institutionalize art, because this has always led to the sponsoring of mediocre and uninspired art, and restricts the free development of contemporary art.

If we must have such a department in Washington, let it be one that is free of politics and one that will function properly. There are many issues concerning contemporary art that require adjustment to present day conditions. Let us choose the right person to represent the profession—one who is willing and competent to meet these problems. I would favor an advisory rather than operative department. And let us not have such a department unless it is devoted to clearly stated purposes.

ERNEST FIENE

Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Dash of Dishwater

Sir:

It is because I have had from the beginning a genuine interest in the Federation of Arts and its magazine that I am willing to send to you a comment on Mr. Vezin's letter, probably circulated somewhat widely.

He made bold to enter the lion's den and beard him then and there; whereas I merely want to put my hand through the bars and perhaps touch his paw. His act was that of a prophet of Israel entering the King's chamber, speaking his mind and acting as a mouthpiece of many others of the Kingdom

who were glad to have their opinions thus delivered at headquarters.

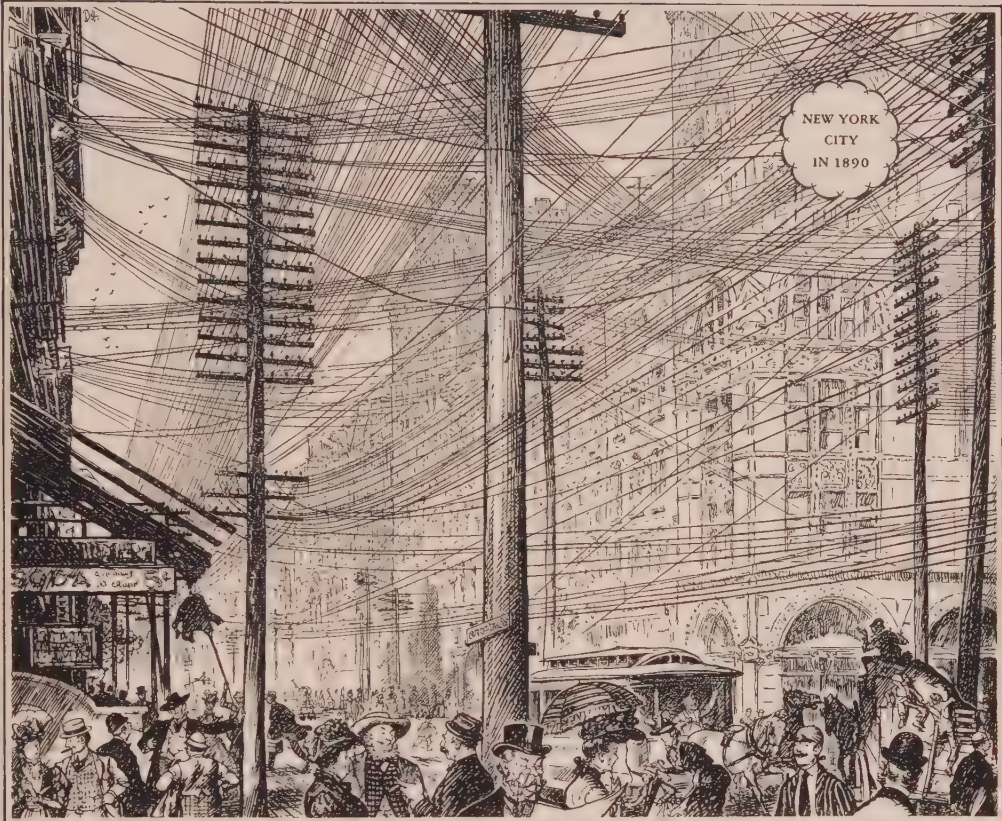
Of course Vezin had to shake the auriferous petticoat again, but in doing so it was to remind us of a truth well known in the art world, that these new Museums were founded largely on the pride of being up-to-date, in being absolutely new, fashionable and modern, which includes a leadership in the procession to "Somewhere Else," well paid for to anyone able to touch the hem of the petticoat for another newness. Be that as it may—"Requiescat in Pace." So Vezin goes on to say that THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE OF ART is becoming humdrum in its pursuit of these same foreign vagaries. There has been a great deal of "harping on" this daughter from over seas, especially since the Magazine's coalition with *Creative Art* when it has become noticeable that the tail has been wagging a large part of the dog. I think the majority of your readers would like to have you show more dog and less tail.

I have the July number here in Ogunquit (too busy to read it before leaving Orange), and as I turn the pages I find another Benton, who is willing to become a clown in the great Art Circus, and whose work we accept and enjoy from this angle, though it more properly belongs in a comic strip. But as I continue I come to the most shocking and impudent exploitation of the means of art's expression and its most noble and time-honored subject, a lithograph on page 403.

Without assuming any attitude of challenge, I would like to ask why this negation of every quality of art creation should find a place in an art magazine. If its presence there expresses a warning of what the popular "freedom" is capable of producing, why was it not so labeled: otherwise it has the editorial sanction as a work of art.

To the layman this is bewildering; to the artist, another reason for agreeing with the Vezin strictures. Surely the editor of such a magazine as goes to a large lay membership, craving a knowledge concerning art and its purposes, though not necessarily becoming a

(Continued on page 575)



Years of Progress

HAVE BROUGHT MANY IMPROVEMENTS IN TELEPHONE SERVICE

BACK in the early days of the telephone, practically all wires were carried overhead on poles or on house-tops. Some of the tallest poles carried as many as thirty cross-arms and three hundred wires.

If the old system were in use today the streets of our larger cities would scarcely have room enough for their canopy of wires. Traffic would be impeded, telephone service subjected to the whims of nature.

Better ways had to be found and the Bell System found those ways. As many

as 1800 pairs of wires are now carried in a cable no larger than a baseball bat. Ninety-four per cent of the Bell System's 80,000,000 miles of wire is in cable; sixty-five per cent of it is beneath the ground.

This has meant a series of conquests of space, and insured greater clarity and dependability for every telephone user. But it is only one of many kinds of improvements that have been made. The present generation does

not remember the old days of the telephone. Service is now so efficient that you accept it as a matter of course. It seems as if it must always have been so. Yet it would be far different today if it were not for the formation and development of the Bell System.

Its plan of centralized research, manufacture and administration—with localized operation—has given America the best telephone service in the world.



BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM

WILENSKI RE-VIEWED

(Continued from page 565)

ski would probably never acknowledge because the recognition of it requires an appreciation and understanding of what the camera has done, not as a mechanical instrument, but under the guidance of artists like Hill, Atget, Stieglitz, Strand, and cinematographers like Eisenstein, Pabst, Pudovkin. This understanding Wilenski does not seem to have. At least that is the inference we are forced to draw after reading his rather shallow, theoretical analysis of what the camera can and cannot do and the difference between its vision and the human vision. To say, for example, that the camera "cannot select" is as ridiculous as saying that a tube of paint or a slab of stone cannot select. It is not the camera that does the seeing and selecting but the cameraman! To be sure the camera has limitations. But so has every other medium of creative expression. To quarrel with the camera for what it cannot do, disregarding what it can, is unpardonably pedantic.

In order to avoid the pitfalls of subjectivist, art-is-what-I-like aestheticism, which Wilenski rightly condemns, he has led himself a merry chase. Theoretically he is on safe ground when he argues that "the true criticism of any original work of art must consist in an examination of the attitude, motives and procedure of the artist who made it and not in an examination of the emotional or other reactions aroused by the work in spectators other than the artist." Actually this method, nobly objective as it appears to be, is not only capable of producing such obtuse criticism as Wilenski's remarks on the camera vision, but it is a contradiction of the true physiological nature of aesthetic apperception. For it deceptively assumes that it is possible for anyone to divorce his immediate, sensuous reactions to works of art from his understanding

of them; that he can order his feeling and his reason to function separately, when, as a matter of fact, they are interdependent and are constantly cross-checking and nourishing each other. It is desirable, of course, not to permit either the one or the other to lead us by the nose. The point I wish to make, however, is that the extent to which we are able to examine "the attitude, motives and procedure of the original artist" will always be dependent upon the extent to which we are able to experience with our complete sensuous being what the artist is trying to say. To pretend, as Wilenski does, that it is possible to make a significant critical estimate of an original artist's work without drawing on our initial visual-emotive experience of that work, is absurd. I don't see how a critic or a spectator can divine what an artist's creative intentions are, unless he has first experienced them visually. And it is his vision of the thing which will lead him to understanding, just as it does for the artist. If there is another path to creative understanding, it has completely escaped my notice.

It is true, as Wilenski claims, that original works of art have an "intrinsic value" wholly apart from the spectator, and that the spectator's reactions to them cannot be taken as their criterion. To assume, therefore, that the artist is best able to judge his own work and to rope off the spectator's judgments as inconsequential, is an evasion of the aesthetic problem in question and not its solution. Wilenski's "theory of comparative values" is, as I have indicated, neither wholly wrong nor wholly right. It is a courageous attempt to create light where there was only darkness. This light, unfortunately, is not yet bright enough nor steady enough to lead us out of an aesthetic imbroglio.

NEW BOOKS ON ART

Japanese Costume

An Exhibition of Nō Robes and Buddhist Vestments.
By Alan Priest. New York, 1935. The Metropolitan
Museum of Art, Publishers. Price, \$1.00.

PREFACING the catalogue to the exhibition of Japanese costume recently held at the Metropolitan Museum is a concise historical summary which gives an excellent picture of the background out of which the classic Nō drama of Japan and an explanatory definition of Nō itself. A ghostly drama of epic character, Nō afforded scope to the artists of Japan in costume design and the creation of type masks. The forty-five plates illustrating the costumes are a *résumé* of both Japanese costume and decorative design. The character of the costumes as designed for tragic or comic types is obscure to the unsophisticated eye, but for interest as design, ranging from the most naturalistic to striking abstractions, the collection is remarkable. A note on the technique of weaving and supplementary methods of decoration is contributed by Pauline Simmons, and the descriptive catalogue reading like a chapter from the *Tales of Genji* includes material of value to anyone seriously interested in the subject.

INSLEE A. HOPPER

Byzantine Art

By D. Talbot Rice. New York, 1935. Oxford University Press, Publishers. Price, \$4.50.

IN D. Talbot Rice, Professor of Fine Arts in the University of Edinburgh, we seem to have another rare example of a scholar who can be pithy and yet profound, who is historically and iconographically reliable, and yet has deep aesthetic sensibilities. How rare this combination is only reviewers of art books know. Generally we have learned to expect either (1) the unimaginative precision of the trained technician who laboriously fincombs a very small plot of little-known ground; or (2) the maudlin "art-literature" behind which dubious scholarship and sensationalized subject-matter masquerade as art appreciation; or (3) a type of art-history that is all too uncommon, that surveys both old and new fields

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with the same pioneering determination to see the essentials freshly through accurate and powerfully sensitized perceptions. The first type of scholarship has added much important scientific data to our historical coffers; the second, much misleading verbiage; the third has given us the only art-history that uses the artistic fact as a springboard for the interpretation of the artist and the civilization that produced him. The publication of a book that falls, more or less, into this last category—as this book by Professor Rice undoubtedly does—is an occasion for rejoicing.

Swift-moving, brilliantly organized digests introduce the student, not only to dates and attributions, but also to parallel and subsequent cultural developments and to those early civilizations that helped to determine the character of Byzantine art. With admirable clarity of purpose Mr. Rice moves from chapter to chapter, from an historical to a geographical background, from a lucid analysis of Byzantine architecture and the many controversial theories associated with its origins, to descriptions and evaluations of discriminately chosen material in all media. It is a vast field, for our author's definition of "Byzantine" includes "all the work produced in the Byzantine sphere" (namely, in the Balkans, in Armenia, in Russia, in Italy, Africa, Greece, and in Asia Minor) ". . . and especially at Constantinople after the synthesis of East and West, of Greek, of Roman, of Syrian, and of Persian elements had been brought about as the outcome of the adoption of Christianity as the state religion." For more than ten centuries these cultural streams and their many tributaries had flowed through Constantinople east and west and into the Slavonic world. This "fruitful traffic in ideas" between the Byzantine capital and the Christian and Moslem worlds is graphically charted by helpful maps and fully amplified in the text and the bibliographies. After reading Mr. Rice's two hundred and thirty-eight pages of text the term "Byzantine" is no longer associated in our minds with a place or a series of monuments but with a flowering of many seeds that were blown through Byzantine centers from the far corners of the earth and back again, in

a new and richer form, into many of the soils from which they came.

The amazing thing is that despite the tremendous scope of his scholarship Mr. Rice must have seen and studied in the original many of the things he discusses, for his criticism seldom suggests the hot-house approach of the scholar who works largely from books and photographs in libraries. His writing is refreshingly clear and unadorned and shows, in addition to a disciplined compactness, a talent for vivid and original analysis, especially when he is discussing structural and stylistic relationships. He sees in Byzantine art, for instance, something "which links it, as far as aims and methods are concerned, with the art of today." This point of view, whether or not we agree that there is an "abstract quality at the back of both," is certainly a healthy contrast to the usual tendency to quarantine periods and overlook their inevitable relationships to parent cultures and artistic progeny.

Mr. Rice urges us not to judge Byzantine art by Greco-Roman Renaissance criteria. For it is this short-sighted approach to Byzantine art which, in the past, led the academic dogmatists to ban it from the classical *sancta sanctorum* as a manifestation of "decadence." We must enjoy it, we are advised, as a non-naturalistic art in controlled "significant" line, with the emphasis more often on the inner than the outer reality.

To the student who is looking for a sound, practical, and stimulating approach to Byzantine art, I can heartily recommend Mr. Rice's book. It has a good general bibliography, an historical table of important dates, over one hundred well-chosen photographs, some of them never published before, and special bibliographies after each chapter with specific references and critical estimates. The most recent research, whether published in London, Singapore, New York, or Leningrad, is briefly and concisely evaluated, and terminology that might be confusing is inconspicuously defined. This book will provide a rich hunting-ground for students for whom books, at their best, are only jumping-off places for original research.

Almost always Professor Rice shows a unique capacity for projecting himself into the

groping mind of his reader, for anticipating his questions and answering them slowly, progressively, opening up wider and wider horizons. Only occasionally, in his desire to be comprehensive, does he lose sight of that "general reader" for whom he is supposed to be writing.

Mr. Rice is at his best when he is not hampered by the conflict between the necessity for conciseness and the desire for completeness. Perhaps the future editions which this book certainly merits will permit Professor Rice greater freedom so that his imagination and his clear vision will at no time be subordinated to his scholarship.

GERTRUDE R. BENSON

New Light on Old Masters

By A. P. Laurie. New York, The Macmillan Company, Publishers. 1935. Price, \$2.25.

THE facts contained in this book have been laboriously recovered from the limbo of lost knowledge by a variety of means—careful collation of documentary sources, minute examination of unnumbered pictures, chemical analysis of pigments, and several forms of photography. The amount of information thus made available about ancient painting is surprising both in amount and in precision; but more important for contemporary practitioners is that about medieval and early renaissance methods.

Such technical knowledge gradually disintegrated with the disruption of the guilds, and it was completely buried under the debris of individual studies using commercial pigments. Because of this loss, the most interesting part of Mr. Laurie's book is the one dealing with the "secret" of the Van Eycks; nor is its interest impaired by his seemingly daring prophecy that that "secret" will be found to have originated in thirteenth-century England. Rembrandt's reversal of the practice of his day is noted, and the sequence of modern developments into the technic of the impressionists (more accurately, the luminists). The contemporary tendency to revert to older and more durable methods is

(Continued on page 576)

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Four-Post Moderns

(Continued from page 547)

gain by his sculptures; and at the same time they would lend to life a finer understanding.

VI

Here, then, are four artists with no academic relation one to another. It is only that all of them are young in spirit; none of them reactionary. Each has a personal and derived quality out of the first moderns. All of them insist that nature, and the discipline to be had from communion with nature, is back of what they do. And yet they possess in common a European quality distinctly of the moment, and distinguishing their production from American art: their preoccupation is with mind over matter, with manner over subject.

This development of modern art in Europe ought to go far, and take the imagination into new fields. Provided always that the same short syllable *sur* does not encourage a complete divorce from nature and lead its prophets into the unaesthetic world of the supernatural and the super-rational.

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Can We Judge Contemporary Art?

(Continued from page 538)

the German schools. Viewing him in this light, Leutze has been mentioned. "We may add the names of Winslow Homer and Wordsworth Thompson, and, among the numerous landscape-painters, Bierstadt, Whittredge, Colman, and Gifford." Not a word about Whistler, Eakins, or Ryder, not to mention Copley and Stuart! American reviewers did not go so far as to ignore Ryder entirely, but they considered him inferior to Blakelock, said that he had no imagination, and that "he painted marines without knowing the sea, and landscapes without observing the facts of nature."

Finally, there is Cézanne, now classed among the truly great of all time. In the days when he was still exhibiting with the Impressionists, the French Inspector of Fine Arts wrote: "Messieurs Claude Monet and Cézanne, happy to show what they can do, have exhibited, the former thirty canvases, the latter fourteen. One must see them to imagine what they are. They provoke laughter and are lamentable. They indicate the deepest ignorance of drawing, composition, and coloring. When children amuse themselves with paper and paint, they do better work." Even Zola, who was Cézanne's friend, told Ambroise Vollard that he could not hang the artist's pictures, but kept them locked away in a cupboard. "It pains me so to think what my friend might have been," he added sadly, "if he had only tried to direct his imagination and work out his form." Zola died in 1902, thinking Cézanne a failure. Shall we ever learn to judge contemporary art?

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COMMENT AND CRITICISM

(Continued from page 566)

leader should at least be a *censor*, an equalizing force, which while giving encouragement to every new manifestation that can be squared with the eternal principles of art, grants no quarter whatsoever to the damnable nonsense of Ultra-Modernism seeking ever to put over the emendations of a diseased and untutored mentality in the assumption that anything goes—if it is only *different*.

I turn the pages again and again receive a shock in the abortive attempt to push the excellent idea of abstraction to its absurd limits in "Mare and Colt" [p. 407]. A point-blank question: Do you agree that this misapprehension of the principle of abstraction is within the limit of art's recognition, or not? If not why do you jeopardize the reputation of your magazine by its inclusion in an otherwise commendable article. I respect the standing of the author as a critic because his fulsome laudations on the first two pages he disavows on the third. It is this drop of vinegar in the sweet cream of following illustrations that incites a doubt of the editorial alertness in sifting the chaff from the wheat.

The jury that plumes itself on being "liberal" by giving a *cross-section*, necessarily includes the dregs in its disregard of standards.

It is equivalent to the chef who provides a cocktail, soup, meat, vegetables, a salad, and dessert, and then looking around for something more, throws in a few scraps, and, to make it absolutely complete, adds a dash of dishwater—a full cross-section of everything the kitchen contains. It's so easy to spoil a good meal that way.

With the vast possibility for freedom and originality *within* the compass of Art's fundamental principles, why break through these for the sake of the dishwater!

In both my books on Modern Art, especially the last (*Thinking Straight on Modern Art*), I suggest the true alignment to be Classic (Academic) Art *plus* Sane Modernism VS. Ultra-Modernism, feeling such allocation, being completely possible, would do much to clarify the atmosphere. Why con-

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taminate the good in modernism by adding the scraps?

Recently Alfred Noyes published a short Jeremiad on this latter type of art, and wound up by declaring, in view of the damage done to both literature and graphic art, that, "unless the Principles were discovered or re-discovered and applied, not only in criticism but as a foundation to all artistic endeavor, the future for civilization was not hopeful."

How long must we dally with the forlorn propaganda of the Bolsheviki and where do we naturally look for the preservation of standards? Is it not with the moulders of opinion? A long confab with the lion but having made bold to touch his paw, I hope he will allow me to shake it.

Ogunquit, Maine

HENRY RANKIN POORE

The lithograph on page 403 to which Mr. Poore refers is by Adolf Dehn. Readers will have an opportunity to see more reproductions of Mr. Dehn's lithographs in a few months when an article on his work appears. Merely to show how opinions differ, the lithograph which Mr. Poore so thoroughly dislikes was given first prize at the Philadelphia Art Alliance last winter.

Needless to say a friendly paw is extended from the lion's den. The art world is large enough for more than one difference of opinion.—EDITOR.

NEW BOOKS ON ART

(Continued from page 571)

approved for reasons both scientific and aesthetic.

But the value of this book is introductory mainly; and the serious student must proceed to more compendious works. The painter would find another book by this same author more useful—*Simple Rules for Painting in Oil*—and of this type of guide there are even more ambitious productions on the market, such as Hilaire Hiler's *The Technique of Painting* and *The Materials of the Artist and their Use in Painting*, by Max Doerner. And the painter, along with the scholar and the connoisseur would turn to still another book by Mr. Laurie—*The Painter's Methods and Materials*. For the beginner in knowledge, then, and for the permanent layman, this summary sketch is most likely to serve; though for either reader greater usefulness could have been attained by better writing and a stricter ordering of the historical material. At all events, the book contains authentic facts; and the dozen plates really illustrate some of the points made in the text.

VIRGIL BARKER

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I sometimes think that to turn from what living men are making to what dead men have made is like turning from the stage to the screen, and that when we do so we need much to compensate us for our loss of intimacy in the performance.

H. S. GOODHART-RENDEL